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[THE MURDER ON THE SKINE.]

MRS. LARKALL'S BOARDING SCHOOL.

By the Author of "Man and His Idol."

CHAPTER LII

THE SECRET DISCOVERED.

Her present mind
Was under fascination: she beheld
A vision, and adored the thing she saw.

Wordsworth.

WHAT was the communication which Gertrude Norman had received which caused her to quit with such abruptness the hotel at which she was staying in Paris and to direct her steps to Berlin?

The question will naturally be asked, and this is a convenient place in which to give the answer.

It will not be forgotten that Joanna the seeress was entrusted to the medical care of Dr. Amphlett.

Under his hands, the strange qualities which singled her out from all her sex were rapidly developed. It had been the care of Adolph Kerner and his wife to soothe and quiet this strange girl, and to prevent as much as possible the exercise of her mesmeric powers. They knew that they were injurious to her, and that loss of health and strength was the penalty she paid for their use.

The doctor had no such compunctions.

He cared nothing—absolutely nothing—for his patient, except so far as she could be useful to him, either in the way of science, or in furthering his malpractices.

Joanna had been but a short time under his roof before she had told him the story of her love, of Roland's pretended passion and desertion of her, and of her object in finding her way to England.

"I could only fly to Roland," she said; "they say he is cruel and wicked, but I love him; and if he could see me, his heart might yearn to me as of old."

"Why did he fly from your village?" the doctor often asked.

Her only response to the question was a shudder. She would not tell.

Just as obstinately Peter Wolff had always refused to answer that important question, involving a secret which might be worth its weight in gold to a clever man. But the doctor was not to be foiled. He had got a winning card in his hand now, he felt convinced, and he determined to make the most of it.

"I will stimulate the clairvoyant faculty in this girl," he said, "till I can read her mind like a book—till it will be impossible for her to have a secret from me—and through her I shall be able to watch Hershaw as a cat watches a mouse."

In this intention he quietly persevered. The results were hardly what he wished for a time; but he did not despair of ultimate success.

On the evening after the meeting at Mr. Walmsley Dyott's, at which Peter Wolff had told the story of his life, the doctor happened to be out walking, and while revolving this matter in his mind, he saw Sir Sydney Robart descending the steps of the Carlton Club, of which he was a member.

They met, and the baronet hastily informed Dr. Amphlett of the news conveyed in Gertrude Norman's letter as to the death of Hershaw.

The doctor shook his head doubtfully.

"You don't question the truth of the statement?" asked Sir Sydney.

"No; but I do question the fact," was the reply.

"But why? On what ground?"

"Simply on this—that my patient has twice and very recently been placed in direct communication with this fellow in her trance-sleep. She has seen him distinctly, has been able to describe him, the place in which he has been, and even the thoughts passing in his mind, so great is the power of the clairvoyant; and I believe that she is now in such a highly sensitive state that she would feel the shock of his death, acting upon her in sudden illness, in whatever part of the world it might take place."

"You are too sanguine, I fear, doctor," returned the other; "the death of a man is not a matter about which there is likely to be much question."

"Of an ordinary man, I admit, it is not; but Hershaw was not an ordinary man. He had as many forms as a chameleon."

"But, my dear sir," urged the baronet, "the man's body is found floating in the river. His wife expressly states that. How are you going to get over such a fact?"

"I can't tell you at this moment," replied the wily doctor; "but I am ready to stand by my favourite science against the world. I would rather take the evidence of Joanna in her trances than that of my own senses."

"Forgive me," was the reply, "but this is enthusiasm."

"You think so?"

"Infatuation!"

"We shall see. At twelve o'clock to-night you shall receive a communication from me. Meanwhile do me the favour of requesting Mrs. Larkall, as your guest, to withhold her reply to the letter she has received."

The baronet promised, and so they parted.

It was late before the baronet returned to the Towers. He was compelled, from business of a private nature, to dine in town, though anxious to pay due respect to Mrs. Larkall, who, as the doctor had said, was still his guest.

The lady, however, scarcely noticed his absence; she was too much occupied.

It will not be forgotten that the reading of Gertrude Norman's letter announcing the death of Roland Hershaw had produced a startling effect on Mahala, who was a concealed listener to its contents.

The paroxysm of the moment did not pass away. It resulted in raging fever, accompanied in its worst stages with delirium.

In that emergency Mrs. Larkall acted, as all admitted, nobly: she elected to become the nurse of the sick ayah.

It is not every one who is anxious to devote themselves, night and day, by the bedside of a delirious, fever-stricken patient; and clearly this poor Indian had no special claims on the humanity of a person in the exalted position of Mrs. Larkall. Yet, from the first moment the word "delirium" was mentioned, the lady stepped forward.

"Let me be her nurse," she said.

Lady Agatha, to whom this was addressed, and who had her class prejudices, was astounded.

"You, Mrs. Larkall!" she exclaimed; "surely one of the servants, or a nurse from the union-house, would discharge the duties better toward this—this young person?"

A more vulgar woman would have said "this nigger," and that was the idea in her ladyship's mind, though she did not express it.

Mrs. Larkall would not hear of the proposal.

She had, she said, known the ayah from a child. She understood all her peculiarities, and would be able to calm and soothe her where others, with the best intentions, would only irritate. She had no fears, and did not mind the trouble in the least. She would undertake the duty willingly.

Everybody wondered at her zeal.

The household were divided in their opinion about it.

Some regarded her as an excellent Christian woman, whose heart was in the right place, and whose conduct reflected the utmost credit on her.

Others—and there will always be suspicious and envious people, you know—would have it that she had her motives in this self-sacrifice. Yes, a faction in the servants' hall, led by the lady's-maid, boldly asserted that Mrs. Larkall feared Mahala more than she loved her, and that she was in mortal terror of what the ayah might "let out" in her ravings.

Howe'er this might be, Mrs. Larkall performed her self-imposed duty cheerfully and alone.

No one was admitted within the sick chamber.

There was not even a doctor in attendance, as the lady declared that she could manage very well by the aid of the family medicine-chest, having had great experience in these matters.

It would have been curious could any eye have penetrated the secret of the sick chamber, and beheld Mrs. Larkall in the exercise of her duties when her patient was at the worst. She regarded the dark face of the girl, who moaned, and fretted, and writhed upon the bed, with a look of shuddering aversion.

"This miserable reptile!" she ejaculated: "to think that she has it in her power to expose me to infamy, and to brand her with the name of—pshaw! I dare not think of it!—I dare not give my thoughts full play, with these drugs to my hand and not a soul looking on. No—no; subtle, treacherous, dangerous as she is, I will not risk my life for hers. I will act toward her as I loved her, and, in saving her life, I may, perhaps, buy her silence. And yet—"

It was a trying moment.

The lady stood by the bed-side, with the chest of chemicals open before her. With nervous, trembling hands, she selected such phials as she needed, and allowed drops from each to fall into a tumbler of cold water. She was preparing a soothing draught. In doing so, it was impossible to avoid the reflection that while certain drops would soothe the patient into a gentle sleep, a few more—so few that a mere error in counting might produce the result—would doom her to a violent death.

Those drops were so easily given.

Their effect would be so wholesome—they would destroy a creature both useless and noxious—and in her death the lady's reputation would be safe.

What a temptation!

What a moment of peril for the woman half-prone to yield to it!

An exclamation uttered by the sick woman perhaps saved Mrs. Larkall from the crime.

"Who says she is his wife?" cried Mahala, with a derisive laugh; "Gertrude his wife! No! no! She's his mistress. She—ha! ha! ha! I'm his wife! I tell you I—I—Mahala—I'm his wife! I'm his wife!"

Mrs. Larkall listened aghast. She did not believe what she heard. Yet there was so much of reason mixed up in the ravings of the ayah that she shuddered to think there might be truth in this also. And of this Mahala alone could tell.

Here then was a motive for sparing her, and in the thought of that the dark thought of the moment subsided.

That night it was reported in the household that the ayah was better. The fever had subsided—the delirium was passing away.

Still no one was admitted to the sick-room.

As Mrs. Larkall, who had given this peremptory order, sat by her bedside, far into the night—her face hardly visible in the gloom of a shaded lamp burning on a table near her—Mahala slowly turned her head, and her eyes contracted, as the eyes of a serpent or a tiger contract, in an endeavour to pierce the dim light.

"What has happened?" she asked at length, in a calm whisper.

Mrs. Larkall started at a sound so different to the excited raving to which she had listened so long.

"Hush!" she said, "you have been ill, Mahala."

"I know. But why? What was it? Something dreadful, I know; but I can't recollect what?"

"No. It was nothing particular," said the lady, trying to soothe the ayah, "you will be better soon."

"But why—"

She stopped. She put her fingers into her ears, as if to shut out some demon-whisper, then uttered a loud cry:

"He is dead! Roland is dead!" she shrieked.

"Pray calm yourself, Mahala!" cried Mrs. Larkall. But the ayah beat her off with frantic hands.

"Dead! dead!" she moaned, rolling from side to side upon the pillow, and flinging her arms about her.

"Mahala!" cried Mrs. Larkall, severely, forgetting the nurse in the schoolmistress, for the moment, "what does this mean? Gertrude herself would be less irrational."

"Gertrude!" interrupted the ayah, in a bitterly contemptuous tone.

Moved by an uncontrollable impulse, Mrs. Larkall seized one of the Indian's outstretched hands.

"Why do you speak sneeringly of Gertrude?" she demanded, "she was your good, kind mistress: she was your friend. Why should you turn against her in this wicked way? Why, I ask you?"

"Why?"

"Yes: you have some reason. What is it?"

"Only my duty," whined the ayah; "I must do my duty. I am a virtuous girl, and she—she—"

"Miserable wretch!" interposed Mrs. Larkall, her face crimson with rage, "what is this insinuation? Dare to repeat it, and I shall forget myself. Gertrude was Roland Hershaw's wife, and whatever he may be, however fallen, however degraded, that does not affect her character or justify you in the terms you have used."

Mahala's impatience would hardly permit Mrs. Larkall to finish this sentence. When it was done the Indian burst out in a laugh of derision:

"It is not true," she said. "Not true, not true! She was not his wife!"

"What! You dare repeat that?" demanded the lady.

"I must speak the truth," was the answer.

"The truth?"

"It is my duty. I must do my duty."

"But what—"

Mrs. Larkall was about to insist on knowing the ayah's ground for the assertion she thus boldly made, when they were interrupted by a low tap at the door of the chamber. Both instinctively heard the sound, and knew who it was that sought admission.

"It is Amy," said Mrs. Larkall. "Not a word of this before her, nor of Hershaw's death. It would kill her," she added, in an undertone.

Then she went towards the door.

The eyes of the Indian following her, gleamed with a sudden light, as if she had lapsed again into the delirium from which she had barely recovered. But no—it was not madness. It was a glow of exultation at the pain she had been enabled to inflict on Mrs. Larkall, and a sudden realization of the idea which that lady's last words had suggested to her.

"Would it kill her?" she asked herself, eagerly; "would she suffer as I've suffered?"

It was in pure wantonness of cruelty that she put this question. The motive for getting Amy as well as Gertrude out of the way, which had existed in her mad passion for Hershaw, was gone with his supposed death. But her bad heart, full of envy, hatred, and all other evil passions, could not endure the thought that another should be less miserable than herself, when she had the power of tormenting her.

It was Amy who stole softly into the room, and as she did so, Mrs. Larkall cast a significant glance at the ayah, and then retired.

"You have been very ill, Mahala?" asked the gentle Amy.

"Yes, dear," was the reply, in a tone of assumed affection.

"And they would not let me come near you."

"She would not," said Mahala, with sudden bitterness.

"Not Mrs. Larkall? But why not? She has been good and kind to you—why not?" urged Amy.

"She good!" sneered the ayah.

"Is she not?" asked the young girl.

"She kind!"

"Why, is she not?"

"Pshaw! You think she is here because she loves me?"

"Surely, yes."

"No, no," cried Mahala; "not so. It is because she fears me!"

Amy started with a scared look from the woman who uttered these words with fierce vindictiveness.

"Yes, fears me," reiterated the Indian. "I know her secret. Amy, I know who she was and what she is. I know who Gertrude was and is—and she trembled for herself in my ravings. But, oh, missy, I've no heart to think of this. Oh, missy, what trouble has come upon us—what sad, sad trouble!"

"Surely no fresh calamity has happened?" asked

Amy; but not with any great interest. The one sorrow of her young life had fallen so heavily, that it seemed to have subdued her beyond the power of conceiving of any greater grief.

"Oh, yes, missy dear," whined the ayah; "they have kept it from you."

"From me! Oh, why, why?"

"They were afraid. But I must tell you. I don't care for them—I must do my duty."

"You frighten me, Mahala," cried Amy. "What has happened?"

Mahala threw her arms about the girl's white neck, and hiding her face in the throbbing bosom that leant to her, whined:

"Oh, poor, poor Roland!"

"Yes—what of him?" gasped Amy.

"Oh, promise me not to blame me! Not to cry out! Promise me that you will be firm and bear up like a brave girl! You will, won't you?"

Amy could not speak. She believed the emotion of the ayah on her part was genuine, and with a feeling of sickness at her heart, she stood with a white face and parted lips, trembling almost to sinking.

"Oh, the sad news!" exclaimed Mahala.

"Tell me?" gasped Amy.

"I will. The news has come that Master Roland—"

"Is alive and well."

It was Mrs. Larkall who spoke those words, to Mahala's infinite dismay.

She had re-entered the room while Amy was absorbed in listening to the ayah, and now stood by the bedside accompanied by Sir Sydney Robart. The message which Dr. Amphlett had promised before midnight had arrived within a few minutes. It simply stated that Joanna had, that night, seen Roland Hershaw in a trance of unusual vividness, and that his dress was altogether different from that in which he had last appeared to her. This intelligence they had come to give Mahala, and it was happily in time to save Amy from a shock, which, in her delicate state might, as the Indian in her diabolical heart well knew, have proved serious in its consequences to her. How Mahala cursed the unlucky chance which had defeated her vindictive purpose! She scarce forgot her ill feeling in the joy of learning that Roland Hershaw yet lived and might yet be hers!

It was the revelation thus opportunely given to Joanna which Mrs. Larkall conveyed in the letter which she wrote to Paris that night and which caused Gertrude Norman to proceed to Berlin, with what results we have seen.

CHAPTER LIII

WHAT BEFEL ROLAND HERSHAW.

Like one who on a lone some road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

Coleridge.

THE ordeal through which Gertrude Norman passed in the mysterious house in Berlin was most trying to one who had already undergone so much. She felt it acutely after the scene was over, as she returned to the Russian Hotel. The mystery startled her. The solemnity weighed like a horrible memory upon her brain. And when she recalled the fearful oath she had taken, and thought of herself as leagued with men bound together for she knew not what dread purposes, qualms of terror prostrated her.

She would have given much to undo that night's work.

She would, had it been possible, have stolen a way from the hateful city and begged her passage back to dear England.

But all this was out of the question.

So, she set steadily before her eyes, the injuries she had sustained, the wrongs she had endured, the righteous cause that moved her to vengeance, and in this way strove to steel her heart and to prepare herself for the work she had undertaken.

There was not much time given her for reflection. The message which Dr. Bayer had brought to the tribunal demanded instant action. Roland Hershaw the Denounced, had left Berlin. He had remained there in secret for several days, but always with a spy upon him, always with some one or other of the emissaries of the Society watching his movements.

O. this he was doubtless conscious, for his conduct had betrayed the utmost cunning as well as audacity, and at last the two qualities had secured the object he had in view.

He had escaped.

What emissaries were set upon his track Gertrude did not know. Though admitted—by virtue of that ordeal which she had passed through so un-suspiciously—a member of the Society, she was not entrusted with its secrets. She was only an agent. All that the body asked of her was—eyes that could watch, and a

hand that could strike when the moment for striking came.

Still, De Bayer who was more attentive to her than ever, informed her that the Society was on the alert and had got a clue to the fugitive. He also warned her to hold herself in readiness at any instant she might be called on to quit that city and depart, who could say where?

In spite of the count's attentions, Gertrude could not like him. His presence terrified her. She could not understand who or what he was. That people called him "my lord," that he wore a Prussian uniform at times, and that when in private dress he was guarded—she had not a doubt of that—by a shirt of chain-mail under his other clothes, were all the facts she could gather respecting him. His manner was quiet and respectful. He treated Gertrude with the utmost deference, talked to her rather as a superior than otherwise, and appeared to consult her every wish. Yet she did not feel drawn toward him.

The secret of all this lay in one word—he was a spy. Yes, in heart, in manners, in his nature the man was a spy and nothing more. All his habits were those of the most repulsive of human beings. When he spoke it was to worm out information—never to impart it. When he was silent his eyes were performing the function his tongue had for the moment given up, they were lingering, searching, ferreting out secrets.

His movements, too, partook of the same character. He came and went, suddenly and noiselessly. People who believed themselves alone found him standing behind their chairs. In unlooked-for circles and places he presented himself, as if absolutely at home there. More than this, he seemed to pride himself on annihilating distance, and bewildering the unsuspecting by apparently appearing in two distant places at one and the same time. This he accomplished by means of swift horses and light closed carriages, used with infinite discretion.

There is something so despicable in the idea of a professional spy that every one shrinks in abhorrence from such a creature, and though Gertrude did not ask herself why it was, her instincts made De Bayer repulsive to her.

Following his usual custom, he was very anxious to worm out of Gertrude how it was that she had been able to speak with such confidence as to Roland Hershaw's being alive.

She could not gratify him; but he believed she could, and followed up his questioning with pertinacity.

"I can only show you my letter from Mrs. Larkall, my guardian, in which she warns me that I am the victim of a gross fraud," Gertrude would say.

"But, my dear madam," the spy would answer, impatiently, "it is—you'll excuse me saying it—but it's absurd. How could she know what we, with all our machinery, couldn't ascertain for a certainty?"

As Gertrude knew nothing of Janna's revelations she could only protest her ignorance.

On the second night after her pretended arrest, Gertrude sat alone in the apartments taken for her at the Russian hotel, brooding with melancholy thoughts and misgivings, when, on looking up, she beheld De Bayer standing before her.

"Count!" she cried, starting at his apparition, "I did not hear you enter."

"Didn't you?" he asked, with a smile. "Ah, you were absorbed in thought."

"I was thinking," she admitted; "but—"

"I saw it, and would not disturb you. But come: the time is arrived. We have found the trail. It will be necessary for you to leave Berlin at once."

"To-night?"

"Yes; at this moment. Everything is settled."

"And do I go alone?" asked Gertrude, with a vague and terrified idea of what might be expected of her.

"Not absolutely. Wherever you may be, I shall not be far off."

He said this to encourage her; but it had the opposite effect. She shuddered at the thought of that man's spectral presence, dogging her wherever she went. All her terror of the Society was concentrated in him. He represented to her its relentless force and its sleepless watchfulness.

Within an hour they started together in pursuit of the fugitive Hershaw.

Leaving them to pursue their journey, it may be well that we give some account of what had happened to the object of their pursuit since the moment at which he quitted the hotel in Paris.

Roland Hershaw's object was, as we have seen, to proceed to the railway station, and thence take the train, so that he might work his way to Berlin. The first impediment to the progress was the meeting with Count De Bayer, to get rid of whom, and at the same time to throw him off his scent, it had been necessary to go a very considerable distance out of his way. A cab was thus rendered necessary to enable him to reach

the station, and it was at the moment of his ordering this that he detected the face of M. Lenco.

Sitting in the cab, he turned his thoughts to the singularity of his meeting these men at that juncture, and the impression suddenly forced itself upon him that he was being closely watched. Those men, he had no doubt, were spies, and it was not impossible that they were more than that—assassins. This conviction, which caused a cold dew to break out on his brow, and set his teeth chattering, was confirmed when, on nearing the station, he perceived to his amazement that one of them had the start of him. Lenco was leaning against a pillar near the gate of the station, with an assumed air of abstracted unconcern upon his face.

The cab was moving very slowly.

Both driver and horse seemed to have gone to sleep under the influence of the warm, quiet evening, and the wheels scarcely rolled, in spite of the French cabby's assurance that he would drive "like thunder." Fear had so strong a possession of the fugitive—for though a brave man, he was, like the rest of us, troubled at unknown dangers—that he felt he dared not enter the station. But what was to be done? If he stopped and alighted the act would attract the attention of those on the watch, and the result would be just as bad. In that extremity he resolved to run a slight risk. Watching his opportunity just as the cab was passing a narrow lane bearing down toward the river, Roland quickly put his arm out on the side furthest from the man on the look-out, and opening the door sprang to the ground.

Before he could give the danger a thought, he was on his legs, tearing wildly along toward the Seine.

The lane which ran down at the back of the houses was deserted; but Roland was very soon conscious of pursuit. It might be the cabman, or Lenco, or there might have been eyes upon him of which he had not guessed.

The ubiquity of "the Society" was a tradition of his family. His own father, the Count Istred, had told him that in the period of its glory, the body was known as "the Eyes," since it seemed to have a power of watching almost supernatural. The stars might have been its agents: the winds of heaven the sources of its intelligence. The thought of this came upon Roland's mind as he bounded forward, with all the speed which a fine gymnastic training could give him.

Presently he ventured to look round.

It was not Lenco. It was not the cabman. The man in pursuit of him was a stranger, and as he could tell, an Englishman. Who could this be? Surely not a friend. Friendship would not prompt a man to run like that. More likely some deadly enemy, some English member of the Society. That was so, no doubt, and with that conviction he would, if possible, have redoubled his speed.

But there was very little space before him. Through the opening walls gleamed the bright, silvery river, rippling in the moonlight.

The lane ended in a boat-stage or small landing-pier, and unless there should chance to be a boat moored there, Roland decided that there was only one of two courses open to him: he must either plunge into the river, which, as he was a good swimmer, might serve his purpose, or he might turn on his pursuer and either overcome or elude him.

With these thoughts in his head, and with a consciousness that the Englishman was gaining upon him, he hurried to within a yard of the water—then stopped.

There was no boat.

With a fierce oath he saw this—then suddenly turned.

"Who are you?" he demanded as his panting pursuer came full upon him.

"Look at me, scoundrel!" gasped the other.

"I do. You are no friend of mine," said Roland, eyeing him angrily.

"Right! I am no friend. You will know that soon enough when I tell you who I am. There can be no friendship between you and Martin Leveson!" The mention of that name staggered Roland Hershaw.

It was like a blow dealt him in the face.

But there was no time to reflect. Martin Leveson in Paris, in pursuit of him, meant exposure, ruin, infamy. It could mean nothing else. Seeing this at a glance, Roland decided upon his tactics.

To the utter astonishment of his assailant, he burst into a loud laugh.

"You Martin Leveson!" he cried. "Do you think I am an idiot? Do you think I never saw the man? Ridiculous!"

As he expected, the man was astounded at his impudence.

He hesitated.

In that hesitation there was time for thought, for determination. In that moment he said to himself:

"If I pitch the fellow into the river I may swing

for it, if I allow him to expose me, I must be transported at least. Here goes for the chance."

And he had contracted his muscles for a spring upon his adversary, who, on his part regarded him with a tiger-like gaze, when his quick ear detected a faint sound in the direction of the river. It was the sound of oars moving in the rowlocks of a boat.

"Whoever I am, or whatever I am," shouted Martin Leveson fiercely, "I will never leave you, Roland Hershaw, till I have made you my prisoner."

He sprang forward, but Roland saw the movement, and evaded it. At the same instant he perceived the prow of a boat slowly pushing its way into sight, some six yards from the end of the landing pier.

Without a second thought he broke from the spot, and rushing toward the river, took a terrific leap, and alighted, sprawling and head foremost, in the boat, which lurched so violently as almost to capsize.

"What, in the devil's name, do you mean by this?" shouted a fierce, rough voice.

It was that of the boatman, who started up as soon as he could scramble to his legs, and raised one oar as if with intent to knock the intruder's brains out.

"Down!" cried Roland, authoritatively.

"But, by Saint —"

"Down, I say, and row—row for your life!"

Roland put his hands on the man's shoulders to force him into his seat; but either he was too angry or too stupid to comply, and before the boat had moved an inch Martin Leveson appeared on the edge of the quay, furious, and evidently with the intention of leaping as his victim had done.

With the quickness of thought the leap was taken; but not so speedily but that, when the poor wretch was in the very act, Roland Hershaw wrested the boatman's oar from his grasp, and dealt a blow at his adversary which sent him back into the water.

"Heavens! You have murdered him!" cried the old boatman.

"Liar!" shrieked Roland; "how dare you make that charge?"

"But see; he is senseless—he doesn't struggle," urged the man.

"So much the better: the dead tell no tales," sneered the other. "Row me to the other side of the river."

"Never!" was the prompt answer.

"What—you won't?"

"I won't."

"Give me the oars, then."

"No."

"What do you mean to do?"

"To try and save this man, or—"

"Or what?"

"Acquaint the police—"

Before he had the words he meant to speak out of his mouth, Roland had seized the boatman by the throat, and a desperate encounter ensued. The boatman was old, but vigorous. The other young, and nerved by the energy of desperation. Their eyes flamed, their teeth were set, their arms twined around each other's bodies like serpents; the boat swayed from side to side with the desperation of the encounter.

It was a mortal struggle.

One or other, it was clear, must go over the boat's side.

That fate was reserved for the boatman. By mere chance Roland succeeded in releasing his left hand, and with the advantage, but not the manliness, of the pugilist, he aimed a foul blow at his antagonist. The blow fell "beneath the belt," and with a horrible groan, the poor old man dropped into the water.

Roland did not want to see what had become of him. By the aid of an oar he punted the boat to the landing-stage, and quickly clambered up the rotten planks, until he stood once more on the spot from which he had leaped.

His first thought was to ascertain whether the man in the river was the only one who had followed and watched him. To his inexpressible satisfaction, he saw that the lane was still empty—it was evidently no great thoroughfare, and having walls only on either side at the lower end, his pursuit had not attracted any attention.

He thanked heaven for that fervently, and then he thought himself what he should next do? To leave that spot instantly must be his first step. He must do it as unobtrusively as possible, too. That was absolutely necessary.

"I will stroll quietly up, as if nothing had happened," he said to himself; "keep a sharp look-out for those rascally spies, and then steal away to some quiet cabaret, and think what's to be done next."

It was easy to talk of walking away as if nothing had happened; but as he used the words, he awoke to the consciousness that his appearance was rather against the part he proposed to play. He stood there bareheaded, with his hair ruffled and blowing about in the wind. He had hardly recovered his breath, and his face was still flushing scarlet. Then his dress was all

disordered, his shirt-front half torn out, his white wristbands crumpled, and his delicate fawn-tinted gloves split up the backs. Worst of all, his hat was in the river, floating slowly off, and with it his gold-headed cane.

Was there nothing else in the water?

Yes—the boat, whirling slowly round, and going out with the tide.

Nothing else?

He saw nothing. The water rippled in a path of light crossing the river; but it might have been dark night for all he saw or cared to see. The loss of his hat was a real trouble, the thought of those starting eyes or the white faces that might confront him out of the silvery water—

With a manhood in their looks
That murder could not kill,

did not trouble him for a moment. He was no dreamer. He believed in real perils, in palpable dangers; not in phantoms. In the living; not in the dead.

The loss of the hat was a calamity. It was so suspicious for a man to be walking about Paris bareheaded. Besides, it was the one purchase he had made in that city by which it was possible that he might be identified.

CHAPTER LIV.

HOW ROLAND CAME TO THE MORGUE.

The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law;
The world affords no law to make thee rich;
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

Romeo and Juliet.

It was farther on into the night, and the moon was shining resplendently, as a stoutish man leaned near the door of the Morgue, smoking a long pipe.

He was a jovial fellow, with a round, red face, small eyes, so buried that no particle of white showed, and a low, wrinkled forehead. This was fully displayed, as on coming into the air he had thrust back a round, felt hat which he wore, and which thus surrounded his face like a glory. For the rest he had a huge waist, sturdy legs, and the hand with which he grasped his pipe was fat and beefy in texture.

Having looked up at the moon, and surveyed the night generally with a sort of appraising eye—as if he was a broker taking an inventory of nature's chattels—he allowed himself to drop back against the wall and gave up his mind and body wholly to the business of smoking his pipe.

In this he might have been engaged uninterruptedly for some quarter of an hour, when a stranger, visible from the red tip of a cigar which he smoked, turned the corner of an adjacent street, and slowly lounged up.

"Nice night," remarked the stranger, with a nod.

"Very, sir, very!" assented the stout man, emitting a long spiral column of smoke from the corner of his mouth.

"Busy?"

As the stranger asked this he nodded towards the Morgue.

"Two," was the indifferent answer—that being sufficient to denote the number of occupants in the temporary abode of death.

"Ah!" ejaculated the stranger, carelessly. "Suicides?"

"No, not to my thinking."

"No? Accidents?"

The man removed the pipe from his mouth very reluctantly as he replied:

"On'y a boat upset."

"Oh!"

And the stranger, taking his cue from the other's indifference, shrugged his shoulders as if that was a very insignificant matter indeed.

Then they fell into a general conversation—about the night, about the apple-harvest, about a recent trial for conspiracy, and so forth, till the stout man seemed to forget that his companion was a stranger who spoke very suspicious French, and at length assented to go and take a drop—only a drop—of brandy at the café round the corner. They went; they were gone twenty minutes; and when they came back the stout man's face had deepened in colour, and his eyes came out so far that it was possible to catch glimpses of the bilious yellows of them. He was still smoking; but there mingled with the fumes of tobacco a much stronger odour of spirituous liquors, and he was much more inclined to talk than he had been.

"A dreary life this of yours," said the stranger, "always watching the dead."

"Not I," cried the stout man, "I ain't always at it."

"No?"

"Bless you! I ain't the keeper of the Morgue. It would kill me in a week. I like life, sir—life."

"Well, but —" said the stranger, who appeared highly disconcerted at what he had just heard; "you have charge of the place?"

"For to-night."

"Oh, I see! You're the keeper's deputy?"

"That's it. He's got a holiday to go and bury his mother; and I'm taking a turn for him. Bless you! I'm a busy man. I like life. I turn my hand to anything, so as it's life. I'm a bit of a broker, a bit of a bailiff, a bit of a horse-doctor, a bit of a toastmaster at great feasts, a bit of a mute at funerals, and I don't know hardly what I ain't a bit of. I can turn a hand to most things."

"Including taking charge of the Morgue?"

"Yes; including that, nows and thens, for my friend Pierre."

"Ah!" cried the stranger, lighting up a fresh cigar from the red end of his last, "and I suppose you make a good trade of money in one way and another?"

"Well, I can't complain," said the stout man; "though the times are hard—doused hard!"

"Not to a man who has half-a-dozen trades, professions, callings, rolled into one, surely?"

The stout man sighed.

"A family of twelve isn't raised on nothing," he said, "it's a pull on a man."

"No doubt."

"It's a drag on a man. It's up-hill work. They're never really off your hands. There's always something—back debts or something. Howsoever, there's no use talking. I'm not a grumbler—never was. My father never was, and he weighed eighteen stone. My grandfather again, he weighed —"

The stranger interrupted.

"Are you paid for doing this work to-night?" he asked, abruptly.

"Well, I may get a franc or so from Pierre; but I can't be hard upon him, you know. He's a friend—an old friend."

"That's all very well," said the other, impatiently. "I stick to old friends, but make new ones, too."

Why, man, I, who haven't known you an hour, can put more in your way to-night than Pierre has in twenty years."

"Eh?" cried the purple-faced man, with astonishment.

"Listen. You say you have two bodies behind the bars—pshaw! man, don't start and look scared as if I wanted to steal 'em. I don't want to touch them, even. But these men were brought here clothed. I saw them."

"You did?"

"Yes. It was meeting the stretchers with them made me stroll this way. Now, I want one of those suits of clothes."

"You want 'em? Impossible!"

"Nonsense; listen to me. How many people have seen those bodies?"

"Two or three, maybe."

"Have they excited any interest?"

"No."

"Has any one been to claim them?"

"No one."

"Very well, then; all I ask you to do is to hang up the suit of clothes I have on at this moment in place of one of those suits, and for that favour I will give you as much as you will earn in a month. You look alarmed. There is no occasion for it. Of course I have my object in making this proposal. As a man of the world, you know that a man does not change a good suit of clothes for an indifferent one, and give five hundred francs into the bargain, without a motive; but I promise you that the motive is an innocent one, and cannot bring you into danger."

"Five hundred francs!" the stout man repeated to himself, and then smoked so hard that he seemed disappearing in a cloud, like a geni.

"It's a good round sum, yet you hesitate?" suggested the other; "why?"

"Look here," said the fellow, in a whisper, emphasizing his words with a fat forefinger on his companion's arm, "if this was a case in which everything was fair and square—"

"And isn't it?" demanded the stranger.

"Well, no; there's one rum thing about it."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. There's two bodies—one's a gentleman; one's a boatman."

"Well?"

"Well; but there's three hats."

The stranger started.

"You mean that three hats were picked up in the river?" he said.

"Yes; and all together. More than that, there was two canes, and a boatman doesn't carry a swell cane when he's rowing."

"No, I suppose not. But what of this?"

"Why, this of it—there was a third man in that boat, what's become of him?"

"Pshaw! How should I know?"

"Certainly—how should you know? But it'll come to light, and then it will be a question who knocked this man's skull in, and made him swallow his front teeth. That'll be it, and one thing leads on to another—"

"And in short," sneered the stranger, "you see

your way to making more than five hundred francs out of the affair in the end!"

The purple-faced man looked at him.

"I wish I did," he said; "whatever happens won't do me no good."

"No," said the stranger, "because heaven only helps those who help themselves. You're not one of them, I see. Well, well; you know best."

And he thrust his hands into his pockets and began to amuse himself by jingling the coin of which they were apparently full.

The purple-faced man fell into a reverie.

Presently he roused himself and asked a question in a whisper:

"You only want the clothes?" he said abruptly.

"Only the clothes!"

"This way."

They left the Morgue and moved slowly down a court, roughly paved with round flints, which rendered walking anything but a pleasant exercise. At the bottom of this court was a door-way, without a door, leading to a black and rotting flight of stairs—the general stairs of a lodging-house. The stout man intimated that he lived on the second floor, and to that they ascended. The room was in darkness, but there was a charcoal fire in a stove still alight, and by dint of a little exertion this was brought to yield a red glow. On this the stranger was left reflecting.

Over this, later into the night, the clothes of one of the men found in the river were hung to dry.

Over this, also, the sum of five hundred francs changed hands.

Then, while it was still night—dark night, too, for the moon was overclouded—there emerged from the court a figure which might have been taken for the ghost of the drowned man lying stark and mutilated in the Morgue.

"This makes all right!" muttered the man. "Things had grown too hot for it to be safe for me to be any longer alive. By this move I throw the Society off the scent, for, with my death, their vengeance ceases. I get rid, also, of that troublesome woman, Gertrude, without the risk of putting her out of the way. I've only now to be cautious, to stick to what money I've got, and retire to my own country in peace and quiet. Yes; I flatter myself that to-night's work is about as clever as any I've yet managed. By Jove! I've a good mind to go to my own funeral. The grief of my wife—who isn't my wife—over the body of somebody who isn't her husband, must be an edifying sight. But no, no, Roland, my boy, that would be risky. Let me push on for Berlin."

He did so, as speedily and quietly as possible. His heart was lighter than it had been for many a day. It was not in his nature to think anything of the crime by which he had purchased security: it was the sense of that security alone which impressed itself on him and caused him unusual elation.

But he had not gone twenty miles on his journey before a sudden reflection caused him to burst out with a fierce oath.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed; "I have left with my clothes that paper relating to the secret treasure, and the other document that I wouldn't have lost for money. What shall I do?"

After much reflection, he resolved to stop at the next station, and to return by the first train to Paris, on the chance of recovering the lost treasure. This was easily accomplished, and within an hour he had re-entered Paris.

But all his hopes, all his sense of security, all for which he had risked so much, seemed utterly dashed and defeated when, on alighting from the carriage, he saw De Bayer and Lencoe approaching arm-in-arm.

Their eyes were upon him.

(To be continued.)

LIVES SAVED FROM SHIPWRECK.—The Board of Trade state that in nine years 1855-63 3,409 lives have been saved by lifeboats, and 2,896 by lines and ropes thrown from the shore either by rocket-and-mortar apparatus or by hand. In the year 1863 the numbers saved were 505 by lifeboats, and 357 by lines and ropes.

A NEW POTATO.—The *Gazette du Village*, a French paper, calls the attention of farmers to a new species of potato, called after its propagator the Chardon potato, of which the produce is on an average seven times as great as any potato hitherto cultivated. Some market-gardeners in the neighbourhood of Paris having observed that the Chardon potato is very productive, very healthy, and of a luxuriant vegetation even in poor land, determined to cultivate it on a large scale. They consequently planted several fields, being convinced that they should derive a greater profit from the propagation of the new root than from the cultivation of any other description of potato in use. They did not recollect that the Chardon is exclusively suited to the feeding of cattle.



[ALLINGFORD CHOOSES A STRANGE PLACE TO MAKE LOVE.]

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER XVI.

When friendship or love our sympathies move,
When truth in a glance should appear,
The lips may beguile with a dimple or smile,
But the test of affection 's a tear.

Too oft is a smile but the hypocrite's wile,
To mask detestation or fear;
Give me the soft sigh whilst the soul-telling eye
Is dimmed for a time with a tear.

Hours of Idleness.

GIRLING never thought of what his conscience would say to him in the future. He was one of those foolish architects who select a sandy foundation upon which to erect their structures, and take no heed in their folly of the beating winds and the rushing floods which in the nature of things are sure to come. He lived very much in the present, and consequently his chagrin at being defeated by Sir Lawrence Allingford when he held the brimming joy-cup to his lips and was able to inhale the delicious aroma of its contents, was all the more acute.

He looked upon his wife with dislike, and only allowed himself to be on friendly terms with her for a particular purpose. This was very despicable of him, but he was now one of those men who do not care about taking pains to keep their honour bright.

Probably Mary Girling was to blame for leaving him in the way she had done, but when she saw how changed her husband had in a brief space become, the prospect of being treated in a better and kinder manner by old friends with whom she was acquainted was very enticing, and it is not surprising that she was allured by it. In the days of poverty and tribulation she had devoted herself to him, but then he was considerate and good to her.

Mary had made herself a neat little home. Although the locality in which it was situated bore a somewhat poverty-stricken appearance, the neighbourhood was respectable. It was inhabited solely by hard-working people—men who went out early in the morning and came home late at night, whose wives did what they could during their husbands' absence to increase the amount of their slender exchequer by the ever busy needle.

There was no grand knocker, fashioned with a lion's head, to hammer against the door, nor was there a bell wherewith to raise discordant echoes in the passages. A latch, of simple manufacture, on being lifted, admitted the husband and his newly-

found wife. The sitting-room was clean and tidy, and the mid-day sun revealed to the somewhat contrite father his children playing on the hearth. Animated by those paternal instincts which it is impossible to suppress, Girling greeted them cordially, and they responded to his overtures with affectionate caresses, which plainly showed that, although Mary had it in her power to warp their young minds and prejudice them against their father, she had never attempted to do so.

Somehow or other Girling felt happier in the bosom of his family than he had done for a long time past. There was something so real, so genial, so homely about it, and these recommendations formed a trio which were wont to have some charms for him. In his ambitious chase after wealth and position he found no repose. All was worry and excitement. Here in the obscure house in an insignificant part of the town, he could, by working hard, maintain himself in comparative felicity. But in that very phrase, "working hard," he found the barrier to the success of the promptings of his better nature. He had grown to detest hard work; he had disliked it when a soldier, and had often paid a friend a small sum to pipeclay his belts and furnish up his accoutrements. Since then he had tasted the sweets of independence. Why should he work in order to keep a simple, trusting, good-natured woman, who had nothing but her home-love and domesticity to recommend her, when he could obtain money in large sums, and enjoy himself in any way his extravagant ideas might suggest?

When Mary saw her husband fondling the children and talking to them in a kindly way, her heart melted, and all her old love for Girling came back, rushing along in an impetuous stream, and sapping the foundations of all the dams which her enforced caution had compelled her to erect.

Going up to Girling, who had his eldest boy upon his knee, a fair-haired, chubby-faced little fellow, just beginning his second decade, she sat down by his side, and taking his hand within hers, said:

"Will you give up the strange pursuits that have had such a fascination for you lately, and live peaceably with me once more—will you?"

"I have no hesitation, provided you will do one thing," he replied.

"What is that?"

"Tell me where the child is, Mary. Let me know what you have done with him, and we will make up our estrangement."

"No, William," she replied, with a shrewd smile, "I am not inclined to do that, and will tell you why.

As long as I have the child in my possession, I feel that I have some power over you."

Girling frowned and looked displeased.

Mary's face beamed triumphantly. She thought that she had said something remarkably clever. She imagined that, by hiding the child away, she had put her husband in an inextricable dilemma. She argued that in order to regain possession of the child he would do anything, and that she had by her skilful diplomacy achieved a hold over him which he could not break through.

He was in great perplexity—he could not make up his mind. Several courses of action suggested themselves to him, but he could not hit upon the right one.

First of all he thought of living again with his wife, and leading an honest, straightforward life, but an evil spirit had entered into him, and he dismissed the idea. Then he wished to get the child into his own safe custody, and was willing to keep the peace with his wife until that result was achieved. Thirdly, he considered that Lady Brandon's fears and weaknesses would prove more lucrative and more conducive to his serenity and peace of mind, than the society of his much-enduring wife, for whose companionship he had imbibed a distaste, since he had seen one immeasurably superior to her in personal charms and accomplishments, and not only seen her, but learned to love her.

The afternoon passed. Mary finding her husband was not disposed to talk, preserved a discreet silence, and took up some work. Girling applied himself to the brandy bottle with great assiduity, and smoked pipe after pipe. Mary stole a glance at him every now and then, and trembled as she saw him drink so much of a liquor to whose potency he was not accustomed. His flushed face soon told the tale of incipient intoxication, while his trembling hand spoke of gradually increasing excitement. At last she ventured to speak, although half afraid to do so:

"Don't drink any more of that brandy, William," she said, in a tone of mild remonstrance.

"Mind your own business!" he replied, in a surly tone. "I don't suppose I am obliged to ask you what I am to drink."

"Certainly not; I don't mean to dictate to you in any way, but I am sure so much cannot be good for you."

Girling threw his long pipe on the floor, as if in an ungovernable rage. It smashed into a dozen pieces, and the burning tobacco rolled out of the broken bowl, and lay smoking upon the carpet.

"Now!" he said, in a loud voice, "if you want to

quarrel with me, I am ready for it. It is what you have been aiming at all day long.

"I have done nothing of the sort, William," replied Mary, gently.

"What do you call interfering between me and my pleasures, then?"

"I didn't mean to."

"I suppose not! You want to deny it, but I won't have it."

Girling rapidly worked himself into a state of passionate agitation; and at length he cried, fiercely:

"I was a fool to come back with you! I will abandon you again—and for ever!"

"Are you mad, William?" she demanded in astonishment, not unmingled with terror.

Without saying a word of farewell to his wife, without looking at her, even, he moved towards the door, opened it, and stepped lightly into the street.

Girling walked rapidly down the street, with a dejected air. He had, however, fallen a good deal in his own estimation within the last twelve hours, and his future path was rather more crooked than he liked to see it.

Mary fell back in the chair and sighed one of those deep drawn sighs which denote that the utterer is very—very wretched.

CHAPTER XVII.

I doubted—fool I was to doubt!—
If that All-piercing eye could see,
If He, who looks all worlds throughout,
Would so minute and careful be
As to perceive and punish me
With man I would be great and high,
But, with my God so lost, that He
In His large view should pass me by.

Sir Eustace Grey.

LADY BRANDON was a sort of Sinbad the Sailor, and Girling was her Old man of the Sea and she was just as indefatigably tormented by him, as that adventurous mariner was by the lazy lump of senility that would ride on his unwilling shoulders. If she flattered herself that he would cease to worry her because his wife was forthcoming at an unexpected moment, she was greatly mistaken.

Sir Lawrence Allingford dreaded Girling for the best of all possible reasons—he knew his power. He was like a fowler who has caught a high-soaring bird, like an eagle or a kite, and knows that it will escape him if he does not clip its wings. Sir Lawrence thought that the best way of clipping Girling's wings would be to marry Lady Brandon at once. They had been engaged for some little time. People regarded them as affianced, and there surely could not be any impropriety in an early marriage.

He took the first opportunity of broaching his idea to her ladyship.

He did not go to Brandon House, because he thought he could talk to her with more freedom out of doors; he knew that he would stand an excellent chance of meeting her in Rotten Row about half-past eleven or twelve o'clock.

Lady Brandon was very fond of riding, and whenever she could spare the time, she sallied forth and took a certain amount of equestrian exercise, which invigorated her.

Sir Lawrence Allingford ordered his horse and rode to the park. He walked his horse gently up the "Row;" and had not gone far before he came in contact with her of whom he was in search. Lady Brandon was cantering at a quick pace, followed at a respectful distance by her groom. On seeing Sir Lawrence, she at once pulled up. After an affectionate greeting had passed between them, she exclaimed:

"It is kind of you to come and meet me. I do not much care about solitary rides!"

"I came to talk to you about one or two things," he replied. "Unfortunately, our meetings generally are the result of business exigencies."

"Let us hope that a time may come when all that will be altered," she said, with a sanguine smile.

"I do hope so. I am sure it is my constant prayer. I am not so fond of intrigue as you are."

"Oh, I like it!" she replied, lightly. "It is my element, and I revel in it. I sometimes wish I had been born a man, and could command armies and win battles, or be prime minister, and be talked about by everybody."

"Very often," said Sir Lawrence, "those who are most famous are the most unhappy."

"It may be so, but I would take my chance of that. I declare I feel in excellent spirits to-day. I have a sensation as if I had been condemned to death, and reprieved at the last moment."

"You are alluding to Girling and his audacious proposal?"

"Why, yes. It is hardly ever out of my thoughts. What a lucky escape! If he had pushed me to extremities, I should have— Well, I will not say what—at all events, I should not now have been here."

"Why not put it out of his power to annoy you again in a similar manner?" exclaimed Sir Lawrence, touching his horse with his whip and riding by her side.

"What do you mean?" asked Lady Brandon, looking intently at her horse's mane, and pretending not to understand the drift of his remark.

"If you would only give your consent to our marriage at once, you would make me the happiest of men, and you would, by so doing, utterly confound Girling. As my wife, he could not insult you. He might extort money, but your purse is lengthy, and able to withstand his demands."

"You have chosen an odd time and a strange place to make love," she replied, a little pettishly.

"My dear Blanche," said the baronet, in a tone of mild remonstrance, "I think your objection a little trivial, if you will allow me to say so."

"I won't allow you to say anything," replied Lady Brandon, with the air and manner of a spoiled child.

"Why are you so arbitrary?"

"Why should I not be? Women have a right to be capricious. Did you ever hear of a woman who was not?"

"I have had very little experience of women."

"In that case I can enlighten you. We are all more or less alike. We have our whims and our fancies, and men must put up with them. We are foolish little people. I know I am clever in some things, but I am a silly thing in many others, and I would rather make love in a ballroom than I would on horseback in Rotten Row."

"If you had only told me that beforehand, or given me the slightest intimation of it," replied Sir Lawrence Allingford, "I would have avoided the thoughtless error."

"Talk about something else," replied the imperious beauty.

"But allow me—"

"No, I will not. Gather up your reins, and let us have a gallop."

Sir Lawrence, finding it was useless to remonstrate, did as he was commanded. He held the reins firmly in his hand, and struck the blood mare he was riding a cut which had the least suspicion of savageness in it. She put her head down, threw back her ears, and set off at a good pace. During the gallop talking was, of course, out of the question; he contented himself with looking every now and then at Lady Brandon, who had a magnificent seat and rode to perfection. She liked something decided: she thought that her figure was sufficiently good to carry off a blue habit, and she wore one made of cloth of this striking colour. It was conspicuous and drew attention towards her; but it did not make her look eccentric or peculiar. She had on a hat like a man's, with a broad band and the edges turned up the least bit in the world at the sides.

When Lady Brandon stopped, Sir Lawrence also checked his horse. They walked along some distance in silence. Her ladyship broke through the barriers of taciturnity and said:

"Why don't you say something, Lawrence? one would think we were going to a funeral."

He smiled, and replied:

"I can believe what you said just now."

"What was that?"

"That all women are capricious, and you do not claim exception from the general rule."

"I don't like people who are so gloomy. Tell me some anecdote, or tell me what they say at the clubs. Do something, or I shall ride away from you."

"I wanted to make love, and you wouldn't let me," he said, with his accustomed serenity.

"Very well," she exclaimed, impatiently, "make love, if you can't do anything else."

"Will you do what I asked you?" he said, regaining his serious demeanour, which he had abandoned for a brief space.

"How tiresome you are!"

"Is it possible to please you?"

"Of course it is. But if you lose your temper and get cross with me before we are married, what am I to expect afterwards?"

"Upon my word, I must do you the justice to say that your capriciousness is unrivalled. Amongst all my feminine acquaintances, I do not know one so well and so thoroughly versed in the art."

"Then you have feminine acquaintances?" she said, with an affectation of jealousy.

"Who has not?" he replied, regarding her steadily.

"Oh, I don't know! I am not a good authority to refer to for information upon so important a subject."

"I have not lived alone in the world," he exclaimed, in a deprecatory manner.

"I only asked you a simple question," said Lady Brandon, trying to look grave; "you may know all the ladies in England, if you like, and Wales, too. It is nothing to me."

"Why should you try and quarrel with me, Blanche?"

"Because I chose to amuse myself," she replied, with a gay smile. "Is it not a good reason? I wanted to make you angry; but I won't tease you any more."

"Will you do what I asked you just now, dear Blanche?" asked Sir Lawrence Allingford, recurring to his former theme with praiseworthy pertinacity.

"What was that?" she replied.

They were walking along again side by side. People on horseback passed and repassed them, but they paid them no attention. Men leant over the railings and stared impudently at Lady Brandon. Men with frock coats and white waistcoats, and tawny whiskers, long and silky, and clouded canes and varnished boots, accomplished park loungers, well versed in the art of staring with a sort of well-bred insolence that you soon get accustomed to, but find at first rather troublesome and unpleasant. Every now and then some one of these took off his hat in an elaborate manner and bowed to Lady Brandon with the accomplished grace of a Brummel or a Wilton. And why not? They passed their whole existence in the endeavour to make themselves agreeable to and fascinating in the eyes of the ladies, and if they succeeded, they are worthy of praise; for in what more honourable way can the life of a man be passed? The stern moralist will reply, in many ways, but then stern moralists are not ladies' men, and so their evidence must be looked upon with suspicion, because it comes from a prejudiced quarter.

Sir Lawrence noticed no one; he was too much engrossed with his own thoughts to do so. He had no eyes for any one but Lady Brandon. She was his treasure—the idol of his heart, and no one could tell how dearly he loved her without they searched in the innermost recesses of that heart which beat for her alone.

"Shall I say it again, dearest Blanche?" he exclaimed, as a burst of glorious sunlight broke through the impeding boughs of the trees, and irradiated the charming countenance of Lady Blanche with a golden splendour.

She inclined her head in token of assent.

"I asked you to marry me," he said, in a low voice; but the zephyr caught up the words and bore them to her ladyship, into whose ears they sank and tarried. "Will you do so?" he urged.

Moments passed. How like minutes they seemed to him who was anxiously awaiting a favourable answer to his timid request!

At last it came. The reply was monosyllabic, but not devoid of significance on that account.

"Yes!" murmured Lady Brandon, looking him full in the face for an instant, and then immediately turning her head away and gazing in another direction.

Sir Lawrence Allingford was transported with joy. She had at last consented to be his, and he would soon be able to regard her as his own, and call her by the darling name of wife.

He had sinned in order to achieve this end. He had leagued himself with the perpetrator of dark deeds, and he had done that which he would not have liked to see posted up on the notice-board of his club; but the little word "yes" consoled him when these strabillous reflections forced themselves upon his mind; and if he was not perfectly happy, he was as near that enviable standard of felicity as it was possible for mortal man to attain.

Lady Brandon seemed quite self-possessed, and presented a strange contrast to Sir Lawrence Allingford, who paid no attention to the salutations of numerous friends on foot and on horseback who recognized him and tried to catch his eye.

Her ladyship, on the other hand, did not seem at all oppressed or overcome. Her nature was more volatile, and she could fly from one thing to another without any difficulty.

They left the park together, and Sir Lawrence Allingford recovered his serenity.

When they reached Brandon House her ladyship said:

"You may as well come in and talk matters over with the earl. He must be consulted."

"Certainly. I will do so with pleasure."

The baronet was, as usual, hovering about the ideal. Lady Brandon was practical. He supplied the sentimentality of existence, whilst she was endowed with the business-like faculty of every-day life.

Lady Brandon alighted from her horse with her accustomed agility, and ran up-stairs, saying she would join the baronet in a few minutes.

Sir Lawrence Allingford slowly ascended the staircase, preceded by a footman.

When they reached the door of the drawing-room, the servant exclaimed, "Gentleman in there, Sir Lawrence."

"Who is he?" replied the baronet, distractedly.

"Don't know, Sir Lawrence. Been here several times before to see my lady."

Sir Lawrence opened the door and walked into the room, exhibiting some traces of anxiety to see the

gentleman who had called on several occasions to visit her ladyship, but did not think sufficiently well of his patronymic to leave his card with the hall-porter.

As he entered, a man was reclining in an easy, careless attitude in an arm-chair, turning over the leaves of a "Keepsake" in an indolent manner.

Sir Lawrence Allingford recoiled with an exclamation of disgust.

He had unwittingly encountered William Girling. "Ah, Sir Lawrence," exclaimed that individual, with unwonted urbanity, "glad to have an opportunity of thanking you for the little service you rendered me a short time ago."

"I know nothing about you, my good fellow, and do not wish to hold any conversation with you," replied the baronet, in high dudgeon.

"If I were a baronet and had a handle to my name, I wonder if I should give myself airs," said Girling, in an impudent tone.

"Recollect, sir," said Sir Lawrence, "that you are only here on sufferance."

"Indeed!"

"And more than that, by just pulling this bell-rope, I could summon a servant, who would, acting upon my orders, speedily turn you out."

"Our friends in plush and powder are perfectly welcome to do it if they can. Pampered menials are not usually dangerous antagonists; but even allowing, for the sake of argument, that they did succeed in doing so, you would only be pulling an old house down about your ears."

"I would run the risk of that. But I tell you again that I do not wish to talk to you. If you wish to see Lady Brandon, why do you not wait in the ante-room; that is the proper place for men like you."

"You wish to know why, do you? I will tell you," replied Girling, firmly; "because I don't choose to. I am an honest man, and not afraid to show my face anywhere. I am not associated with murderers and kidnappers."

"You dare to talk to me like this!" vociferated Sir Lawrence Allingford, his eyes rolling in a sort of wild frenzy.

"I do, and I will repeat what I said, if it will gratify you in any way."

At this critical juncture Lady Brandon descended from up-stairs, and appeared slightly surprised at seeing Girling. She greeted him with a frigid bow, and exclaimed, with a sarcastic smile:

"I trust you have made up what little differences existed between your wife and yourself?"

Girling winced at this cutting remark. He felt the full force and the pungency of it, but he replied bravely:

"I don't see in what way my domestic affairs can interest you, Lady Brandon, but I will, with your permission, turn to a subject which does interest you nearly."

"And what may that be?"

"As matters stand at present I cannot marry you as I proposed; the time may come when I shall be able to do so. Until then I wish you to remain single. Ever busy rumour, which spares no one, associates your name with the affable baronet on my right hand, who has, I perceive, done me the honour to get red in the face at some remarks I had the pleasure of making just before you entered the room. Now, entertaining the regard I do for you, it stands to reason that it would pain me considerably to see you led to the altar by the affable baronet whom I have had occasion to allude to. Therefore I beg that you will wait patiently until time or accident frees me from the trammels which at present hamper my freedom of action."

Sir Lawrence Allingford took a rapid stride towards Girling at the expiration of this speech, crying:

"No lady shall be insulted in such a manner while I am standing by and able to prevent it."

Girling looked at him contemptuously.

Lady Brandon laid her hand upon the baronet's arm, and said beseechingly:

"Do not excite yourself; leave him to me."

"I have only one thing to say," cried Girling impetuously, "and that is, you shall not marry Lady Brandon, Sir Lawrence, or, if you do so you will consign her to destruction. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have espoused a felon bride, whom justice will clamour for even at the church gates."

Sir Lawrence Allingford grew purple in the face with rage, and breaking away from the feeble restraint that Lady Brandon imposed upon him, rushed up to Girling with demoniac fury flashing from his eyes, looking as if he was prepared to annihilate the rash man who had presumed to step between him and his happiness.

When Girling saw the hostile demonstration on the part of the baronet, he retreated a step or two, and sitting down upon the edge of a table, put his hand in his pocket, and drew forth a little pistol, the same one that he had told her ladyship some time ago,

that he carried about with him to guard himself against the delicate attentions of Zanzebar. He coolly and deliberately pointed the muzzle at the baronet, and said, in a warning voice:

"If you come an inch nearer, I fire. I am a man of determination, and you had better think before you rush upon your fate."

Sir Lawrence Allingford hesitated. The gleaming barrel of the tiny weapon made an impression upon him. There was that in Girling's eyes which said, that he would not hesitate to do what he threatened, if he were hard pressed.

Lady Blanche Brandon turned as white as a ghost. She could shed the blood of people for whom she did not care, without compunction, but when a terrible fate awaited one who was dear to her, the very action of her heart was almost suspended, and she looked on in terrified amazement.

The blood had mounted to the baronet's head. He was half mad. Scarcely knowing what he did, he rushed upon Girling, trying to take him unawares. A struggle of a fearful nature ensued, in the midst of which the pistol was discharged.

The report echoed through the room with a noise like miniature thunder.

A dense smoke enveloped the combatants, and for a while, all was confusion and bewilderment.

(To be continued.)

THE GRACEFUL VILLAGE BELLE

So simple and so lovely

Her glances cast a spell,

Was Mary, kind and bashful,

The graceful village belle.

A heart of noblest feeling,

Worth all the things on earth;

A nobleness much higher

Than titled fashion's birth.

A something rare, delightful,

Was beaming on her face,

Like to an angel's beauty,

With something of its grace.

Her neck was fair and swan-like,

Her voice of gentlest tone,

So pure, the village boasted

An angel of its own.

Fresh wreaths of water-lilies

The gazer might behold,

In clusters on her forehead,

Amid her curls of gold.

A beauty high and holy,

Like poetry of flowers,

Gave Mary all the brightness

And wonder of her powers.

Her step, superb and queenly,

A calm, unclouded glance,

That told of love's sweet dreaming,

And all its fond romance;

And, like a startled fairy,

By moonlight in the dell,

Was the gentle, bashful Mary,

The graceful village belle.

W. B. G.

EUGENIA; OR, THE QUEEN OF THE FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was deep mourning in Lichtenhain castle. The young countess, who had long been sickly, died. The count had never loved her: he married her when almost a boy in years, at the wish of his mother, the haughty countess Lichtenhain; she did not possess those qualities which could win the heart of the noble and fastidious Count Lichtenhain. He remained with her till the last moment—he had done his duty; but when she was dead he did not wear the mask of sorrow which he did not feel. He left his child and estate in the care of his mother, and went to foreign countries.

The young countess had been a gentle, unobtrusive woman; passive as she was, she was welcome to the countess-mother, who had her entirely under her control—therefore she missed her, and the bereaved child also missed her mother; but she was only five years old, and at that tender age sorrow is not understood, and seldom remains.

The funeral ceremonies created more sensation than the death itself. The event, however, was soon almost forgotten.

The child was to have a governess. The castle was built on a high hill, which commanded a lovely valley, but was at quite a distance from any city; and, as the countess advanced in age, her former connections were broken off, one by one, and, as the young countess had had none, she had to resort to an advertisement for a governess.

Among the numerous applications which she received was one from a worthy old clergyman, who wished to secure the situation for an orphan, the daughter of a deceased friend. As her father had but recently died, she was yet in deep mourning. An orphan! that was just what was wanted; and she would understand her duties, and make no pretensions. So the countess wrote to the clergyman that her coachman would meet the young lady at the station on the appointed day.

Eugenia was the only child of Charles Elworth, and had never known her mother. Elworth was nearly mad with grief when his young wife died. Social life lost all attractions for him. He resolved to seclude himself from the world, and only live for his child, sweet Eugenia.

In the depth of the forest he knew a lovely, secluded spot, known to but a few persons: there he had a cottage built, and buried himself from the world with his daughter.

Though Eugenia naturally had a proud character, and had been educated by her father only, yet the magic of her beauty, and the exquisite depth of feeling of which her heart was capable, somewhat modified the almost masculine direction her character had taken under these circumstances.

She was beautiful; I will not attempt to describe her. The beauty of woman does not always lie in the regularity of features alone; it is the expression which stamps it lovely.

Eugenia was the daughter of the forest, and, also, its queen; she was a Venus and an Amazon, a Juno and a Minerva; for there was no branch of art and science which she had not been taught thoroughly by her well-educated and talented father in a greater degree than some of the first governesses of the best young ladies' seminaries.

She dearly loved the chase; how could it be otherwise? Her father was passionately fond of that pastime, and she often accompanied him on his excursions; she was the warmest and kindest friend of the deer and roe, and, after wounding one, she would often shed tears of sympathy for the poor, suffering creature.

She had seen but few persons besides her father, their old servant, and her nurse, and, therefore, knew but little of the world, only what she had gathered from her books; but she was, in most respects, far above the majority of her sex, and lacked only one thing—experience and self-control—to shine as a bright star in society; but she had not the remotest idea of those two—in society indispensable—qualities. Her loving father never had occasion to detect her faults, as to him she was always an obedient and affectionate daughter, who never had a will but her father's; they always understood each other; it was no sacrifice for her to give up a wish or idea for the sake of her kind father, but a natural act of love and obedience.

The cottage was furnished with every comfort of high life; but Elworth never received company.

Thus passed Eugenia's life till she was eighteen—lonely, but calm and happy, and never disturbed by even the lightest touch of real sorrow.

But now the iron hand of merciless, relentless fate destroyed this serene and poetic life.

One day, when her father was hunting, his gun accidentally got discharged: the ball lodged in his breast. Eugenia cared and mourned from love and sympathy for the pains of her father; but she knew not that the wound was fatal: she did not think it possible that her father could be taken from her. The physician had told him that there was no hope of his recovery. Mr. Elworth felt that he was dying; yet he did not wish to alarm Eugenia by telling her the truth; he wanted to spare her the sorrow as long as possible. But, as the fever increased, he lost control over his will, and so could no longer conceal his true condition.

When Eugenia became aware of her misfortune, the strong, courageous girl fainted. When she revived, she took a seat by the bed of her father, and there she watched day and night, to see if she could not detect even the faintest glimmer of hope in his stuken eyes.

But of no avail were the passionate and fervent prayers which her pure heart sent to the throne of Him who hath power over life and death. He had ordained it otherwise.

On the tenth day of his sickness, Elworth felt that his dying hour had come. Eugenia wrung her hands in bitter agony. His last words were:

"My daughter, keep your heart pure and true. Trust in God: He never forsakes those who trust in Him."

Then he took a ring from his finger and gave it to her.

"Take good care of this ring," he said; "it belonged to your mother."

After these words a deathly pallor overspread his features. He sank back on his pillow, and the last

struggle was over—death had won the victory over life.

Eugenia's grief was at first wildly passionate. Even the little birds that tuned their morning's joy made her well nigh mad with their sweet melody. Then her grief took another form, that of quiet submission, and she was now able to listen to the gentle admonitions of the clergyman, who had been a friend of her father, and had been present in his dying hour.

Elworth had appointed him as guardian to his daughter. After the burial he took Eugenia to his own house, away from the home where she passed her happy childhood, away from the scene of her first great sorrow.

As she had never before been away from her forest-home the new scenes and new faces with which she was surrounded, somewhat diverted her thoughts from her great grief, and thus modified it, or rather she was able to control it better.

Her father's property was sold, but the sum realized was not sufficient to support her. She was too independent to remain idle in the house of her guardian; for she knew she must be a burden to him, as his salary was small, and he had a large family of his own to support.

The advertisement of the Countess of Lichtenhain, for a governess, attracted her attention, and, with the sanction of her guardian, she applied for the situation; and, as we have seen, met with the desired success.

CHAPTER II.

EUGENIA started at once, and was met at the station by the magnificent family-carriage of the Lichtenhains. The coachman and footman had anticipated to see a plain country girl, who, with the greatest astonishment, would admire their rich liveries and the gilded carriage; they laughed in advance to think how bashful the little governess would be, surrounded by all this splendour.

But what was their surprise, when, led by the clergyman who had accompanied her so far, a tall, beautiful, imposing lady advanced, who, without even deigning to cast one look at the carriage, ordered the footman to take care of her baggage with the air of a queen who is accustomed to see her slightest wish obeyed.

Eugenia entered the carriage, and then bade her kind, old friend once more farewell. Then she leaned back in her seat and gave vent to bitter tears as the carriage rolled away.

Eugenia was alone now, dependent on her own exertions; no fond parents to shield her from the rough storms of this life—alone—a bitter thought for the poor girl. She did not look up again till they drove into the court-yard of the castle.

After the countess had extended to her a brief welcome Eugenia asked to be shown to her own room. The countess was somewhat surprised that she—an orphan—should have a wish, and so courageously express it, for which, as she thought, there was no reason; yet she ordered a servant to show the new governess to her apartment.

After Eugenia had unpacked her trunks, and had tastefully arranged her books, she rang the bell, and told the servant, who answered the summons, that she desired to see her pupil.

At this the countess was still more astonished; but, as she did not wish to compromise her in the eyes of the servants, she made no remark about this—what she called—presumption.

Eugenia had not the remotest idea that there would be any presumption in her wishes; she did not even know the meaning of that word. She was willing to do anything for others, but she also wanted her own reasonable wishes fulfilled.

Eugenia and little Agnes were soon friends, and she gave her first lesson that same day. The little one was very ignorant yet; but that suited Eugenia best, as she could now educate her, and develop her character.

In the evening, the countess sent a servant to ask if Miss Elworth would prefer to take supper in her own room, or with the family.

This pleased Eugenia, and she sent word that she would, with the greatest pleasure, conform to the wish of the countess.

Upon this she was asked to descend to the dining-room, which she entered with such charming grace, and with such an innocent look of cheerfulness, that the stern expression on the face of the old lady melted at once.

With astonishment the servants noticed the pretensions of the governess, but mere still the compliance of the old lady, who, for her imperious character, was feared and almost hated by all.

Agnes improved rapidly; but when or how she studied was difficult to tell, as they were at home very seldom; garden, field, and forest were the school-rooms.

Truly, Eugenia had a singular mode of teaching, but her good star had led her to the house of the countess, whose own unusual character caused her to feel an interest in everything unusual.

Eugenia was now the beloved pet of the old lady. She enjoyed unrestrained liberty; and those who saw her, and were not acquainted with her position, believed her to be the daughter of the house. She had a horse for her special use.

Only in one point the countess would never give her consent. She never would allow Eugenia to indulge in her favourite pastime—hunting. She had been passionately fond of it in her forest-home, and now that this enjoyment was forbidden her, she desired and longed for it so much the more.

Eugenia had been at the castle about a year when little Agnes made a promised visit to a relation, and was to be absent for several weeks. Eugenia now had all her time at her disposal, and she improved it by making long excursions on foot and horseback all over the surrounding country.

At last she could no longer resist the temptation to try once more her elegant lady's fowling-piece, and rummage the forest as she had been wont to do in days gone by. She selected that early morning-hour, which Shakespeare describes so beautifully:—

Lo! when the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From her moist cabinet, mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun riseth in his majesty,
Who doth the world so gloriously behold
The cedar-tops and hills seem burnished gold.

At first she was satisfied by shooting only small birds; but soon this did not suffice, and, as her sharp eyes just espied a deer, she took aim, and the poor animal fell.

Eugenia had only slightly wounded it, but yet the poor creature was unable to escape. Her compassion and sympathy were roused in an instant; and to kneel down on the grass, examine the wound, hastily tear her handkerchief and tie it over the wound, was the work of a minute, as the deer was very quiet. She did not know how lovely she looked in that position, and how well the excited flush became her face.

Neither did she know that this pretty tableau had a witness till, after she had finished her work, she raised her eyes and met those of a handsome, tall, elegantly-dressed gentleman, apparently about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, who, after apologizing for his intrusion, expressed his sympathy for the animal, and asked her how it happened that she found it, and if she could not tell in which direction the poacher escaped.

The question startled and embarrassed our Amazon. The word "poacher" sounded rather stern. She never thought that her deed deserved this epithet. In her embarrassment she quite forgot to question herself whether or not the stranger had any right whatever to ask those questions, but, blushing, confessed that she herself was the transgressor; upon which the stranger smiled and said:

"Fortunately for you the law for such transgressions has no effect on ladies; therefore I shall have to pardon you, though I must confess it would have given me great pleasure to arrest such a fair transgressor."

Eugenia did not understand the meaning of his words, as the gentleman was not in hunting costume, and evidently could be no keeper.

He then offered his assistance in taking the deer to her home, as he thought it natural that it should be placed in her care.

The ludicrousness of her position now quite overcame her, and she smilingly answered:

"Well, then, let us take it to the castle; for that is where we belong—the deer as well as myself."

"To the castle!" exclaimed the stranger. "And your name?"

"Miss Elworth, the governess of the young countess," she replied. "And yours?"

"Count Lichtenhain, Miss Elworth, the father of your pupil!"

To say more than this, for the present, the dignity of the father did not permit, though he would gladly have thrown that aside just then.

Eugenia was, at that moment, the very personification of astonishment. She thought the count was in foreign countries, as the last time the countess had heard from him he was in Rome.

And then the picture she had formed of him in imagination, was so vividly different from the "chevalier" by her side.

In imagination she had always adorned him with the grandfatherly dignity of his ancestors, whose portraits she had often seen in the picture-gallery of the castle. But her reflections on this subject were very short, and she concluded them by saying to herself:

"Is it the count? Why, then, it is no misfortune. The countess has always been so kind to me, as only

a mother can be; so why should I be afraid of her son, the count?"

With this she regained her self-control, and began to chat with the count. She told him many things relating to their domestic life, which she knew would interest him, especially about his little daughter, who was very lovely and intelligent.

Thus some time had passed in pleasant conversation; then they thought of the deer, and were sorely puzzled how to remove it to the castle in order that the countess should not find out. The castle was at quite a distance, and so was the nearest village. She partly divined his thoughts, and proposed to build a hammock of rush, which could be found in a creek near by them.

The count thought the idea excellent; so they commenced at once; he furnished the materials, while she braided it, and thus the task was soon finished. Then they had to hasten home, as already "the sun had dried up the dewy morn," and Eugenia was afraid the countess would miss her.

The deer was laid on the hammock, and each took hold of one end, and, in this manner, they carried it to the castle. They selected an unfrequented path, and so they arrived at their destination without anybody seeing them.

Eugenia hastily repaired to her room to change her dress before she appeared in the presence of the countess.

The count placed the deer in the care of a servant, with the observation that he had walked home from the station to surprise his mother (which was true), and, on his way through the park, saw the deer, and shot it with his revolver; but only wounding it very slightly, he resolved to take it home to his little girl.

CHAPTER III.

THE countess was surprised to see her son. She had not expected him so soon; and, although she was happy to see him, yet she would rather that he had extended his travels a few years longer, as had been his intention, till Agnes was old enough to be sent away to school, so she could dispense with a governess. Her womanly tact could easily imagine the result of his daily intercourse with Eugenia, and, therefore, she did not like it that her son should meet her.

How could he become acquainted with one so young, so beautiful and talented, and see her daily, without learning to love her? Not even she, the haughty countess, who had always looked down with contempt upon any one who was her inferior in rank—even she could not withstand the magic of Eugenia's character—she had to love her.

Such thoughts floated through her brain, even while she was affectionately embracing her son. Though reluctantly, yet she was obliged to introduce her son to Eugenia, when they assembled in the dining-room for dinner.

Eugenia bowed with as much ceremony as if she had never seen the count before. She acted her part to perfection, and showed that, in this respect, she was no better than the rest of Eve's daughters.

The count related his story at the table, how, in walking home from the station, and passing through the woods, he wounded a deer—had it brought to the castle, and, if Eugenia had no objection, he would be very happy to place it in her and his little daughter's care.

Eugenia, of course, accepted the offer with the greatest pleasure, and, after dinner, they all went to see the deer, and make arrangements to have the wound dressed, and have it properly cared for. In a few days it had entirely recovered, and was so tame that it followed Eugenia, wherever she went, like a dog.

The secret, which Eugenia and the count observed about the deer, was the link between them, and served to bring on the catastrophe so much sooner.

The countess felt the coming misfortune—for to her it was a misfortune—but come what might she firmly resolved never to give her consent to such a *mésalliance*. He, the Count of Lichtenhain, whose ancestors could be traced back two centuries, and who had all been counts, should never marry a daughter of the people, whose accomplishments, beauty and true worth weighed like a feather in the scales of rank and noble birth. No! never should she consent to have their name, which had been unsullied for centuries, stained by a *mésalliance*. She would set all the powers of earth in motion to prevent it.

Day and night her thoughts were busy to contrive a plan to prevent the impending event. But, oh! love is a powerful enemy, over which it is difficult to gain a victory—especially by a third person; besides, she loved both, and really wished that Eugenia was their equal in rank and name, that she could call the lovely girl by the sweet name of "daughter."

The count made no secret of his love. The more

plainly he showed it, in the same degree hers decreased, and the firmer became her resolution that they must be parted, at any risk. But how? She knew the firmness of her son's character, and Eugenia's was even more so, if possible; so what could she hope under such circumstances?

The tragedy developed itself sooner than she expected.

One evening the count, after he had been out riding all the afternoon with Eugenia, entered the apartment of his mother, and told her in a few words that he loved Eugenia and that she had promised to become his wife, and to complete his happiness, he wanted his mother's blessing.

"Herman," she said, "is it possible that you are in earnest? Do you really intend to enact a peasant comedy?"

"Mother," replied the count, "did I not sacrifice eight of the best years of my life by marrying the woman you selected for me, whom I never loved? Now, when an angel of purity, kindness and love has won my heart, whom I love with that deep passionate and undying love, such as only a man can feel who, for the first time, finds his ideal, you will now stain this pure and holy love with such paltry objections? Mother," and childlike his voice became, "give us your blessing, for," and his voice trembled, "the father's blessing builds the children's houses, but the mother's curse, like a hurricane, blows them down; mother, not the commanding count, but your son, your only child, is before you, and, on his knees he entreats you; give, oh, give us your blessing."

This moment was terrible to the countess, who felt her heart softening, but with a mighty effort, aided by the consciousness of what she deemed her duty, she controlled the pleadings of her heart.

"Never!" she exclaimed, with apparent coldness.

"Choose between mother and wife."

"Mother, is this your last word?"

"My last."

"Well, I have chosen."

With these words he left his mother.

For several minutes after her son had left her she sat motionless like a statue. The conflict between love and pride in her heart had been terrible. She confessed to herself that Eugenia was much more worthy to be her daughter than the deceased countess, and she was not heartless enough to remain cold while about to demand such a sacrifice of Eugenia. She was ready to acknowledge true worth in others, though in position her inferiors, but she had no idea to let that have any influence upon her actions.

Having now firmly resolved upon her course of action, she hastily left the room, and, providing herself with a lantern, walked through a long corridor, at the end of which she touched a spring. A secret door opened into a small room; she entered, and, by touching the spring, closed the door again. She then touched another spring; a trap-door opened, the machinery of which was so arranged that a person could descend with ease, and ascend if taking the end of a thick rope before descending; but if a person should be sent to those lower regions unexpectedly, or should accidentally forget to provide himself with the end of the rope, then that person became lost from the face of the earth; the trap-door closed, and down in those depths the sound of any human voice calling for help would never reach the surface.

Through this trap-door the countess descended.

CHAPTER IV.

EUGENIA was sitting in her room by the open window; for once the moonlit landscape did not attract her attention, and call forth her admiration; no, she was lost in deep meditation; her all-absorbing thought, which quite crowded out all others, was that Herman loved her; he had told her so that very afternoon; and, although she had long felt that he was not indifferent to her, yet his confession sent such a thrill of joy to her heart as is only felt on such occasions. Ah! it was an exquisite feeling to know that his every thought was her own; that she was no more to stand alone in this world, but have his strong arm to lean upon, who would, as far as in human power, protect her from the rough storms of this life, and share with her what cannot be averted.

Byron is right when he says:

Yes, love, indeed, is light from heaven.

Her sweet dreamland wanderings were cut short by the unexpected entrance of the countess. She was surprised to see her at such an unusual hour, and her quick wit in a moment divined the cause of this late visit. She arose and advanced slowly towards the countess; she now expected the storm, which had been impending, to break forth in all its fury; therefore, great was her astonishment when the countess affectionately embraced her, and called her by her favourite pet names.

This display of affection was partly caused by sym-

pathy for Eugenia, of whom she was about to demand such a sacrifice, and partly by more selfish motives; she thought that, perhaps, by kind entreaties and by reasoning, Eugenia could be persuaded to renounce her love.

Eugenia instinctively felt what was hidden under those embraces and kisses, and, instead of returning them, she coldly asked for the wishes of the countess.

"My wishes?" she replied, to Eugenia's question. "Obedience, submission, and your return to that sphere of thought to which fate has appointed you, and not to raise your eyes to the sole heir of the Counts of Lichtenhain—one of the noblest, oldest, and most powerful families in the country."

"Countess," said Eugenia, scarcely able to hide her emotion, "the same fate that gave me my father, my education, and turned my thoughts in a direction that so amazes you, this same fate won for me the heart of Herman. I am proud that I won his heart without a countess's coronet. My coronet, my noble ancestors, are the knowledge and the consciousness of my worth, the bequest of my beloved parents. It is their blessing which won for me the heart of one of the noblest men on earth. Oh, I love him so truly and so devotedly! I will never give him up, never! no more than he will leave me; and stronger and firmer are not the walls of the dungeons underneath your castle than is the heart which now makes this decision."

"I see it," quietly said the countess, but with such an uncertain and hesitating an expression that Eugenia began to hope again. "Follow me, then, child, that all may be decided to-night."

With these words she started in the direction of her son's apartment, and Eugenia followed: but, as if she had forgotten something, she turned off into the corridor, which led to that secret chamber. She touched the spring, the door opened, and she entered, beckoning to Eugenia to follow her, who was highly astonished as she witnessed these performances. She never knew that such a secret chamber existed in the castle; thinking no harm, as she believed the countess preserved her family jewels and valuable documents there, and was now perhaps in search of such a document, she did not hesitate to follow her, and the door closed behind them. Now the countess once more began to entreat, as if she yet had some hope of persuading her, first with kind words and tears; but when she saw that these did not have the desired effect, she, in her thoughtless pride, told her all the reasons why a union with her son was utterly impossible. Eugenia noticed that she was so excited that she knew not what she was saying, and with every word her excitement increased.

"She is afraid of me now," thought she; and triumphantly smiling, said: "do not trouble yourself to repeat those words."

"Well, you have pronounced your doom," cried the countess, passionately; "the grave, which your pride deserves, is here—and I will bury your youth, and try your strong and firm heart"—this she said mockingly—"in the walls of my dungeon!"

With these words she stepped back and touched the spring. The spot on which Eugenia was standing moved, and—she went down, down into the depths.

The same evening the countess gave directions to the coachman to have the carriage ready by daybreak the next morning.

She thought that if Eugenia would sacrifice her love to the count, she would send her away at once, so she would not be able to have another interview with him, and if not, we have seen what her plans were, and how she carried them out. Now another thing remained to be done—to deceive the count as to the mysterious absence of Eugenia.

Just as the faint streaks of coming morning were glimmering on the eastern horizon, a closely-veiled figure entered the carriage which was waiting at the door. It was the countess. The carriage then rolled away.

Two hours afterwards it returned, and the coachman stated that its occupant, Miss Elworth (that was his belief), whom he had orders to take to the station, had escaped; when he arrived at his destination, the carriage was empty; and on his way home he found her hat and shawl on the bank of the river.

The count's feelings upon hearing this sad intelligence can better be imagined than described.

He naturally supposed that his mother had tried all her arts of persuasion, and had even threatened Eugenia, till at last she yielded; but on her way to the station her grief had overcome her, and to end her sorrow she had sought relief in death by jumping into the river.

He left the castle the same day without bidding his mother farewell, and only leaving as his address the name of his banking-house.

Little Agnes was sent away to a young ladies' seminary. Everything was changed in the castle which had so lately been the abode of happiness.

Instead of the cheerful voices, instead of music and arts, beauty and love, death and dreariness had now their habitation there, as if the revenge-seeking spirit of the wronged girl haunted those rooms and corridors, and as if the hand of God was punishing the one who had sacrificed the happiness of so many on the altar of pride.

It is midnight. All is repose in the castle: only its mistress is awake.

Since Eugenia disappeared so mysteriously, she would not permit her attendants to remain near her at night, as they had been accustomed to do.

She wished to be alone—all alone; and now we see her creep along the corridor, anxiously glancing around to see if any one sees her. In one hand she carries a basket filled with provisions, and in the other a lantern.

She enters the secret chamber, where we saw her with Eugenia. Then she opens the trap-door, and places her provisions, wood, and books in another basket, to which a rope is attached, and lowers them through the opening.

The trap-door closes, and she returns the same way as she came. Nobody has seen her.

CHAPTER V.

KIND reader, let us in imagination descend through that trap-door. We see a comfortably furnished room; crimson damask curtains cover the damp walls; a warm carpet covers the floor; a lamp is fastened on the ceiling and a bright fire is burning in a little stove, giving the room quite a comfortable appearance. Now two hands are occupied in emptying the basket which the countess had lowered; these two hands belong to Eugenia, for she is the occupant of this room.

When we first saw the countess descend to these lower regions she had made a fire in the stove to dry the curtains, carpets, &c., because she partly anticipated the result of her conversation with Eugenia, and therefore got everything in readiness for the disposal of her poor victim.

Here she hid her from the world; she supplied her with all the necessities of life, even luxuries, books, &c., as a recompense for the liberty of which she had robbed her. Every morning Eugenia found her basket filled.

Eugenia's first feeling, after she had arrived in those depths, was one of wild, passionate grief; she threw herself on the floor, for she thought that she had been buried alive.

At last she found a few minutes of repose and forgetfulness in sleep: when she awoke and looked around, she was quite surprised to find herself in a comfortable room, lighted by a lamp, a fire burning in the stove, and in a basket on the table provisions to last her three days. But again the consciousness of her helpless condition overpowered her, and this time she found relief in tears; for three days and nights she ate nothing, and let the fire go out; she wanted to starve, freeze, and die.

But at last love of life triumphed. Eugenia surveyed her room with interest, and took pleasure in arranging the furniture to her own taste; but great was her gratification when she discovered her books and material for every kind of fancy-work; these helped her pass away the time. She was very industrious, and worked with both hands and brain, and thus she was able to forget her misfortune for many an hour.

But, oh! what would she not have given to see once more the beautiful earth and its surroundings—sun, moon and stars—to hear once more the concert of the feathered songsters in the wood, while reclining on the greenest and softest of carpets under one of those noble oaks. Oh! and would she see her Herman any more? Her thoughts were ever of him, and many a time she asked herself whether he believed her to be dead.

Every reader can imagine the torture of Eugenia's mind, as week after week, month after month, and even years passed, and yet no glimmer of hope of ever being released shone like a star in her prison. It was the same dreary, monotonous life; no prospect of ever regaining her liberty. It was only her trust in heaven that helped her to bear up under her afflictions, and preserved her reason under such maddening circumstances in her lonely prison.

As already stated, the countess supplied Eugenia constantly with all the necessities of life, and she never feared that the means of sustaining life would ever be stopped. Who can, therefore, describe her surprise and horror when one morning she found her basket empty!

It was some time before some supposed possible reason could quiet her fears and apprehensions. As yet she had food enough to last her several days longer, so she dared not fear the worst; and a warm, heartfelt prayer, carried by her angel-guardians to the

throne of God, brought strength and comfort to her poor heart.

The second morning came, and her basket was still empty. The third came, and the fourth, and at last Eugénia had nothing left to eat or drink. She became weaker every day, and at last she could not rise from her bed.

Her condition was terrible. At first all the evil spirits of despair, hatred, and disbelief awoke in her soul: she imagined that its demons had only preserved her life until now to let her die the miserable and terrible death of starvation.

The poor girl had already suffered dreadfully, but what where her previous sorrows compared with her present agonies?

CHAPTER VI.

LET us now turn to the countess. Quite a different influence prevailed up there in those stately rooms. While in the depths of the castle angels were watching around the couch of the innocent, never with the countess was the sweet sound of the word "peace" heard; but the dismal and gloomy spirits of sin and crime haunted the house, howled in the language of the storm through those neglected rooms; spoke from the faces of the servants, who hardly dared to smile; but most audibly it spoke from the pale, haggard face and the singular behaviour of the countess herself.

Two years had passed since that night. Two long years had her conscience—the worm that never sleeps—tortured the heart of the proud woman, and had not permitted her to enjoy one happy hour—one night's rest.

"You have murdered her happiness, and with hers your son's. The time will come when he, your own son, will curse you. Cain's mark is written with words of fire on your brow, therefore everybody fears and hates you, and every one shuns your society." So spoke the voice of conscience, and it spoke truly.

Although no one could prove the crime of the countess, yet her gloomy and disturbed countenance excited suspicion; and, besides, her nightly journeys to that secret chamber could not fail to be observed by her servants.

The count had not seen his mother since that eventful night, and did not desire to see her. He could not forget the wrong she had done Eugénia, whose image was still fresh in his memory.

But the countess herself was not less unhappy than her victims. There were moments when her better self whispered to her to restore Eugénia to liberty, but fear overcame those whispers—fear of having her name dishonoured before the world even more than it could have been by the *misalliance* of her son. No, rather suffer anything than this, rather sacrifice the happiness of two persons, to this insane shadow of imagination; nay, even sacrifice her own soul! But there is an end to everything. No strength is so powerful but that it can be exhausted; so, at last, the strength of the countess sank under the heavy weight of those dreadful external as well as internal influences which she tried to shake off in vain.

With horror she thought of Eugénia's condition when she felt that weakness was gaining control over her body. She made arrangements to supply her with provisions in advance, but suddenly her strength gave way, and she was unable to leave her bed.

The despair of the countess was unendurable when she became convinced that she must either make an open confession of her crime, or become in reality the murderer of Eugénia.

The presence of mind with which she hid her emotions from her attendants was remarkable, and worthy of a better cause.

These maddening thoughts only hastened on her dying hour, and she had scarcely sufficient strength left to write a brief note to her son.

She wrote thus:

"Herman, for Eugénia's sake, come to your dying mother."

Although the count immediately hastened to comply with his mother's dying request, yet five long days passed before he arrived. Five days? Five centuries for the dying Eugénia and the despairing countess! The fifth night the countess could not rest any longer. The pangs of her conscience were insupportable.

She sent her attendants away with some excuse, hastily took what establish she could find, and tottered through the corridor. She arrived at the trap-door and opened it, but this exertion took her last strength away; she fainted, and as she was falling she was caught by a pair of strong arms—it was the count. He had just arrived and was going to his mother's room, when the light at the end of the corridor attracted his attention, and following that direction he arrived just in time to catch the fainting countess in his arms.

No sooner had he seen the open trap-door than a thought, quick as lightning, flashed through his brain.

To take up his mother, carry her into her room and call the attendants, was but the work of a moment; then he hastened back and descended through the trap-door. When he arrived at the bottom, what was his surprise to find himself in a neatly furnished room. His eyes swept around the room; he saw a bed, and on it the dying Eugénia.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, and these words perhaps arrested the departing spirit; her heart knew the sound of the loved one's voice; appealingly she lifted her hand, and he, with a foreboding of her real condition, took a small bottle of wine which he fortunately had with him, and poured a few drops down her throat. Then he did not hesitate a moment longer to ascend with his precious burden. He took her to his room and tenderly laid her on the sofa, and then hastened to get what was necessary to restore her to life.

The count was terrified and grieved when he found out the crime of his mother, yet he had presence of mind sufficient to keep it a secret. He admitted no one to his room, but he himself watched over his lost and found Eugénia. She recovered more rapidly than he had dared to hope.

CHAPTER VII.

Two days afterwards a carriage was again waiting at the door of the castle before the break of day. The count carried Eugénia to the carriage, took the place of the coachman, and then drove to the house of the clergyman, Eugénia's guardian, which was about twenty miles distant.

Great was the surprise and joy of the good old man when Eugénia, in the arms of the count, entered his humble dwelling, as he, too, believed her to be dead; the countess had sent him all her effects, with a note enclosed, stating that Eugénia, probably in an attack of insanity, had committed suicide.

The count could not stop to answer his numerous questions; but promising to return soon and explain all, he hastened back to the castle—to the death-bed of his mother. Before he left the carriage, he looked around to see if Eugénia had left anything which could betray that she had been present. He found a ring, which had probably slipped from her thin finger; he put it in his pocket, and then inquired about his mother. He was told by the physician that she was suffering terribly, and had repeatedly and anxiously asked for her son; so he hastily repaired thither. He had not seen her since he carried her fainting to her room.

When, at last, he entered her room, she sent all her attendants away, as she wished to be alone with him.

"My son!" she said, with an effort; but the struggle within was so terrible that she could not continue, and, weak with excitement, she fell back on her pillow.

The count supported her with his arms, and, by the movement he made to accomplish it, the ring which he had found in the carriage rolled out of his pocket on the bed. The countess eagerly followed it with her eyes; the count noticed it, and handed it to her. It showed two clasped hands encircled by diamonds; this was the escutcheon of the countess's parents. The countess carefully examined the ring, and then, with a moan, she exclaimed:

"God be merciful!" and then fainted.

The count was surprised as well as grieved, and did not know what to think of the singular behaviour of his mother. She soon recovered, however, and her first words were:

"Where did you get this ring?"

"It is Eugénia's," he answered.

"Herman, I have murdered the daughter of my sister! Curse me, as heaven will curse me! Eugénia is buried alive! I did it to keep our illustrious name unsullied; and she must be the daughter of my only sister. I never spoke to you about my sister, because our father disowned her for having fallen in love with an intelligent young man, but who was of humble descent; and, knowing that our parents would never willingly give their consent to a marriage with him, she eloped and married him secretly, hoping to obtain forgiveness for this act. But she knew not how far the pride of our father would go. He told her never to show her face again in his ancestral mansion, and disinherited her. Afterwards I heard that she died very young, and left an only child—a daughter. This is her ring, with her initials and the escutcheon of our father. So Eugénia must be her daughter, and, unknown to me, she has lived with us. She does not resemble her mother, but probably her father, who, they say, was a handsome, intelligent man. She is dead—she is dead—and I have murdered her! There she stands at the portals of heaven with the sword of revenge, and denies me admittance!"

The count was horrified at this dreadful confession of his mother, and he almost felt his heart grow cold towards her in her dying hour; but soon his better

self triumphed, and with the consciousness that he had no right to judge her, he gently said:

"Mother, Eugénia is safe, and has forgiven you! A proud woman of the world, you buried her; but, rescued from her grave, she freely forgives you."

"Son, son!" once more she passionately cried, "tell the truth; a dying person cannot easily be deceived. You wish to blind my eyes so that I cannot see the angel of revenge standing by my bedside; but it is all of no avail; there is only eternal woe in store for me. In my life I never thought of an existence beyond the grave, where there will be an end to earthly power and greatness. Bring Eugénia here, for not until I have seen her will I believe your words."

Herman went after Eugénia to bring her to his mother. Her appearance at the castle could not now disclose the guilt of the countess. On the contrary, it convinced those who had charged her with the crime of murder that they had done her injustice.

When Eugénia entered the room of the countess, surrounded by the glory of heavenly loveliness, and when with sweet, gentle words she told her that she had freely forgiven her for being the cause of her past sufferings, the countess, with streaming tears, the first she had perhaps ever shed, asked the forgiveness of her son and niece, and gave them her blessing.

At length her spirit departed. The last day of her life had brought that peace which she vainly sought in the honours of the world.

Eugénia became the beloved wife of Count Lichtenhain. They left the scene of her sufferings, not to return again; but, before they departed, the count had the dungeon walled up to prevent another crime of the same kind. The count purchased a beautiful villa situated on the Bay of Naples, where their happiness was as quiet and serene as the deep blue sky of beautiful Italy.

Eugénia, the "queen of the forest," the proud and heroic Judith, had become a gentle and loving wife, adorned with all the loveliness and gracefulness of a true woman. The perfect humility, which shone from her magnificent eyes, made her even more lovely and beautiful. She was to her step-daughter, Agnes, a loving, gentle mother, and to her husband, a true, loving, and beloved wife. A. S. H.

"BOILED BRASS."—Some ingenious man at Wolverhampton designed to evade the duties in France, and therefore styled certain goods which had been silvoplasted as "boiled brass." This was decidedly a new article of manufacture to the Frenchmen, who discovered the fraud on making proper inquiry. The firm were fined for making a false declaration.

CAUSES OF DREAMS.—Although the predisposing causes of dreams may be looked for in more than one direction, they are in general referable to some peculiar condition of the body, and are often called into action through the agency of the external senses. Dr. Gregory, having occasion to apply a bottle of hot water to his feet, dreamed that he was ascending Mount Etna, and found the heat insufferable. On another occasion, when the bedclothes fell off, he dreamed of being in the Arctic regions and suffering from the frost. Dr. Reid had a blister applied to his head, and dreamed of being scalped by Indians. Damp sheets have caused a person to dream of being dragged through a mill-pond. The smell of a flower applied to the nostrils has called forth the idea of walking in a garden; and the sound of a flute has invoked the most pleasing associations. They also indicate the peculiarities of the dreamer; a miser will dream of his gold, a philosopher of science, a merchant of his ventures, a lover of his mistress; but, as a general rule, dreams exaggerate every circumstance, agreeable or otherwise.

A SCENE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.—I went to the coronation with Lady Bristol, who had a still greater mind to be a Lady of the Bedchamber than I had; she told me I was to be one, but durst not then tell me she had heard it from the Princess herself. When we came from the Hall into the Abbey, the peeresses' places were so full that we and several other ladies went to the bishops' benches at the side of the altar. I sat next the pulpit stairs on the back bench, and several ladies coming by me to go nearer the altar, at last my Lady Northampton came, pulling my Lady Nottingham by the hand, which last took my place from me, and I was forced to mount the pulpit stairs. I thought this rude; however, her ill-breeding got me the best place in the Abbey, for I saw all the ceremony, which few besides did, and I own I never was so affected with joy in all my life; it brought tears into my eyes, and I hope I shall never forget the blessing of seeing our holy religion thus preserved as well as our liberties and properties. My Lady Nottingham, when the litany was to be sung, broke from behind the rest of the company where she was placed and kneeled down before them all (though none of the rest did) facing the king, and repeating the litany. Everybody stared at her, and I could read in their

countenances that they thought she overdid her High Church part. But to return to my place. The lords that were over against me seeing me thus mounted, said to my lord, that they hoped I would preach; to which he answered, that he believed I had zeal enough for it, but that he did not know that I could preach; to which my Lord Nottingham answered, "No, my lord? Indeed, you must pardon me. She can and has preached for these last four years such doctrines as, had she been prosecuted in any court for them, you yourself could not defend her." This he said with such an air that my lord spoke of it to me.—*Dairy of Mary, Countess Cooper, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales, 1714—1720.*

MY SUPERCARGO.

My ship was all loaded, and my papers all made out, my whole cargo being consigned to a house in Canton. I was young then to have command of a ship; but I had been fostered upon the big ocean, and the ship was my home.

I was only twenty-five; but twelve years of that time had been passed on shipboard, and I had proved my ability by one eminently successful voyage, and again was I engaged, at an increased rate of wages, to take charge of the ship.

The owner was Mr. Ichabod Mallett, a rich old merchant, in whose employ I had been for a number of years, and whom I respected for his uniform kindness and generosity. He was a proud man, nevertheless; but his immense wealth, which he had accumulated by honest industry and perseverance, gave him some justice in his pride, and since he had been so kind to me, I surely had little reason to complain.

It was just dark when the ship's hatches were closed upon the last article of cargo. The crew were all on board, and the pilot was to come on board early on the next morning to take us down with the first ebb of the tide. After matters were all arranged, I left the ship in charge of my mate, and then turned my steps towards the dwelling of Mr. Mallett.

There was no particular need of my calling again at the merchant's house, for I had no particular business to transact with him; but I had learned to enjoy the society I found there—the society of pure and cultivated minds—a society of which I had enjoyed, but little, very little, in my lifetime; and so I went to pass one more agreeable evening. There may have been one particular person in Mr. Mallett's family whom I thought of more than all the rest; but be that as it may, I had not then acknowledged to myself that such was the fact.

When I rang the door-bell I experienced a sensation which was strange to me, but I had no opportunity for reflection, as the door was immediately opened, and with but little formality I was ushered into the drawing-room where the merchant's family were assembled. Mr. Mallett and his wife were there, and also their daughter, Rosamond, and one son. I was very kindly received, and after shaking hands with the daughter, I was introduced to the son. Robert Mallett was a very young man—only two years older than Rosamond—very lightly built, and looking like one who has been worn down by hard study. This young man was to be my supercargo. I had never seen him before, as he had been for some years attending college; but his countenance at this time did not strike me favourably—not that there was anything positively bad, but the qualities which I noticed were of a negative kind. I thought he lacked energy—and then there was a restless look about him which I thought betrayed a mind made uneasy by some petty vices and dissipations. But I only saw him then by lamp-light. I had too much politeness to stare him directly in the face, my observation was therefore imperfect; and as my conclusions were very hastily arrived at, it would be no wonder that they might have been somewhat unjust.

Robert Mallett had received from his father a full account of all the ship's cargo, and he was prepared to enter at once upon his duties. He was an only son, and it was more in consideration of his health, than of any particular qualifications, that he was placed in the office, for I had received instructions from the old gentleman to oversee the commercial transactions, and, in fact, to attend to them all, only leaving the young man to do the writing, and ostensibly act as supercargo. He was not in a mood for conversation, and so I bestowed no further attention upon him.

With Mrs. Mallett I could hold but little sociable talk, for she was one of your proud, reserved sort of women, who can be condescending without being familiar, and who held her pride of station as something almost sacred; but Mr. Mallett was quite social, and with him I conversed freely for some time. The old gentleman had been looking over some papers when I first entered, and after he had given me half-an-hour of his attention he turned again to his papers—unfolding them, running his eye over them, and

then noting with a pencil upon a memorandum-book. Occasionally he would look up and speak to me, but it would be only some passing remark which needed no reply.

Thus I was left almost to the sole attention of the daughter.

Oh, she was a beautiful creature—more beautiful in my eyes, perhaps, than in others; but for myself—and I am quite old now—so old that my hair is grey—I never saw a person more beautiful.

She was not tall, but she was tall enough, and her frame was most exquisitely formed. Her face was pure and fresh in its colour, perfect in its outlines, and lovely in its every expression. There were dimples in her cheeks and chin, and when she smiled, her whole face seemed to break forth with a warm, enchanting sunlight. Her eyes were of a rich, lustrous hazel, and they varied in their deep, soft light with every passing emotion. With this being I sat and talked; but I know that my voice trembled, for I felt strangely agitated.

She made me tell her of scenes in my ocean life. I had told them to her half-a-dozen times before on former visits, but yet she listened to me as though the theme had been a new one.

She gazed up into my face as I spoke, and sometimes she would smile as I touched upon the cheerful, and then, again, her features would settle to a look of gentle sympathy when I told of some danger passed. I did not then realize what stout cords I was binding about my soul. I did not know how surely my heart was stealing itself away from my bosom.

At length Mr. Mallett finished the examination of his papers, and as he began to tie them up the clock struck ten. Heavens! where had the time flown to? Three hours! and they had seemed but so many minutes. Surely the gentle god had been stealing those hours away.

"Captain Palmer," said the old gentleman, looking me in the face as he laid the papers from him, while a slight smile played over his features, "you must excuse me for neglecting you, but I had business that I had planned for my attention this evening; and of course you knew my habits with regard to business."

"Business first," I returned, by way of granting the excuse he asked.

"Before pleasure at all events," said he. "But this business is a peculiar one," he continued, with a look which puzzled me. "I am about to part with some of my property."

"Ah," said I; and as I spoke I thought Rosamond trembled. Certainly her face was paler than it had been when she was conversing with me.

"Yes," added Mallett. "When you return again you will find one member less in my family. I am going to give my little Rosa away."

"To be married?" I uttered.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, rubbing his hands with evident satisfaction. "I have found an excellent husband for her. Ah, Rosa, you don't like to have it mentioned, eh? Indeed, I had no idea you were so bashful. Come, come, if you ever expect to make a fit wife, you must look the thing in the face with more courage."

These last remarks were addressed to Rosamond. She was trembling violently, and her face had turned very pale.

Upon my own heart this information had struck like a thunderbolt.

Like the lightning's flash the conviction came upon my mind that I loved the fair girl myself, and in an instant that love grew to a wild, tumultuous frenzy. I could sit there no longer. My head almost reeled with giddiness, and with some half-uttered sentence I arose to take my leave.

Mr. Mallett noticed my manner, and he asked me if I was unwell.

I made a stammering excuse about hard work, fatigue, headache, and so on. He was sorry, he said, and I can remember that I thanked him for his sympathy.

As I took my hat, Rosamond closed the door of the drawing-room behind her, and in the hall she pronounced my name. I stopped and turned towards her.

"Captain Palmer," she said, in a strangely trembling tone, "you must be kind to my brother during your long voyage, for he is not very strong."

"To please you, lady, I would foster with kind care the meekest thing," I answered, as I caught the soft light of her dark eye.

"Be kind to him," she continued, with increased emotion, "for he will be all to me. He has been a wayward boy, but I—"

She hesitated, and looked up into my face. I could see a tear starting from her eye. Some wild fancy whispered that that tear might be for me. But what a fool I must have been to harbour such an idea! Of course, it must have been for her brother.

"I will do all you wish," I uttered. "*I will love him for your sake. Farewell.*"

Rosamond put forth her hand, but she did not speak. I caught it and pressed it to my lips. On the next instant I was half-frightened at my own temerity, and dropping the hand I held I murmured a God's blessing, and then hastened away from the house.

Oh, how madly I loved that beautiful girl. But what of that? What could she ever be to me? I struggled hard to overcome my feelings as I walked along towards my ship, but the shaft had entered too deeply into my soul to be easily removed, and when I sought my berth that night, I was still battling with the love I could not uproot.

On the next morning a carriage came whirling down upon the wharf, and my supercargo and the pilot alighted from it. It was half-an-hour, at least, earlier than I expected them; but the pilot signified his wish to cast off at once and make sail. The tide had just turned, and everything was favourable.

"Mr. Mallett," I said, addressing the young man, "I thought your father was coming down with you?"

"He is not well this morning, sir, and consequently will not be here. But I have all the papers, so there is no need of delay."

"Better set off at once," said the bluff old pilot. "There is a fine wind stirring, and I'll soon have you outside. My boat went down half-an-hour ago."

"If Mr. Mallett is not coming down," I replied, "I have no objections to casting off at once."

"He will not come, of course," said Robert, with considerable earnestness in his tone and manner, the result, probably, of his thinking that I rather doubted his first statement.

I had no further objections to make, and so I called all hands to get the ship into the stream. In less than half-an-hour our head was pointing seaward, and under the three topsails, spanker and jib, the ship was starting forth upon her voyage. Soon the topgallant sails were added, and then the courses, and we were slipping rapidly away towards the ocean.

It might have been fifteen minutes after we had made sail that my first mate took the glass from my hands and levelled it towards the wharf we had left. With tide and wind we had made nearly three miles.

"There's a man just got out from a carriage, and he's waving his hat like a good fellow," said the mate, as he lowered the glass and handed it to me.

I immediately got a view of the object, and I could not only distinguish the man to whom my officer had alluded, but I was confident that it was none other than Mr. Mallett. He was waving his hat most furiously, and he appeared to me to be half distracted.

"By heavens, sir!" I uttered, turning to the pilot, "I must heave-to. There is Mr. Mallett upon the wharf."

"We cannot heave-to here, sir," he returned. "The channel is too narrow for any such operation as that."

"Let me take the glass," said the young supercargo.

Mechanically I handed him the instrument, and for some moments he gazed upon the object of our remarks. At first he turned pale and trembled; but soon he grew calm again, and when he lowered the glass and turned towards me there was a strange smile upon his face. He took me by the sleeve and drew me on one side.

"Captain Palmer," he said, with some tremulousness in his tone, "that is not my father. My sister told me you would be kind to me—that you would protect me."

"The young man spoke with such a winning, imploring way that I could refuse him nothing."

"I will be as good as my word," I quickly replied.

"Then," continued Robert Mallett, speaking in a tone so low that none but myself could hear him, "I know who that man is upon the wharf. He could imprison me at this moment if he had me in his power. I may have done wrong, but it would not make me better to be carried to prison. For my sister's sake, save me!"

"I can heave-to now, sir, if you wish," said the pilot.

"No, sir; I would have my ship at sea as soon as possible," I quickly replied.

My supercargo gave me a grateful look. Ah! for his sister's sake, I'd have done much more.

"I think there's a pilot-boat putting off after us," said the pilot, who had been looking through my glass back upon the wharf.

My supercargo clasped his hands, and looked at me most imploringly. I mistrusted that he had been engaged in some wild prank, and, perhaps without meaning evil, he had made himself liable to a severe legal penalty. But I was determined to save him, and I gave orders to keep on.

In half-an-hour longer we had reached the clear sea, and a pilot-boat came alongside. I clewed up the courses and laid the main-top-sail to the mast, and as the pilot's skiff came under our gangway, he gave me a shake of his honest hand in farewell, and then went over the side.

"Captain," said my mate, after we had filled away and set the courses again, "that boat is surely making signals to us."

I took the glass and looked. The boat was coming down with both gaff topsails set, and I saw a man in the bows waving a flag. My ship was the only thing for which these movements could have been made, for there was no other sail near save the boat that had taken my pilot, and she was standing in.

"Shall we heave-to again?" asked my officer, as I lowered the glass.

"No, sir," I returned. "Get up the stud'n'-sails below and aloft. Set everything that will draw."

The mate hastened to obey my order, and ere long the old ship had a bone in her teeth that might have shamed a race-horse. With a fresh breeze upon the larboard quarter, and all the larboard stud'n'-sails set, we were running the reel off in fine style.

"God bless you, sir," uttered my supercargo, as the boat was lost to sight; and as he spoke he passed me and went below.

Time passed on, and the more I saw of my supercargo, the better I liked him. My conclusions on the first night I saw him did not do him justice, for he was by no means the rakish fop I had taken him to be. His dark moustache looked a little "soft" at first, but as I found that there was a really good heart below it, I thought no more of it, save that once in a while I would find a curl of contempt working about my lips when I noticed the young man devoting more than ordinary care upon his fastidious outward appearance.

Before we had been a month on the voyage I found that Mr. Mallett had done wisely in making me the responsible commercial man, for my supercargo, with all his education, had little business tact, as I discovered in conversing with him upon various subjects connected with commerce. I tried, by various hints, to get at the secret of his movements before he came on board—movements which led to the result he so much feared on the morning of our getting under weigh; but he avoided the subject with evident uneasiness, and at length I gave up the design.

Matters moved on very smoothly until after we had entered the Indian Ocean. My crew was an excellent one, and my officers were capable and faithful.

It was towards the middle of the afternoon. We had had the wind on the starboard quarter all day, but now it began to lull, and the heavy canvas flapped against the masts. My supercargo was leaning over the taffrail to windward, with one elbow upon the boat-davit. I was at the wheel trying to make out which way the wind was trying to come from, when I was startled by a quick cry of alarm from a man who stood close by my side. I had just time to look up as the spanker-boom went jibing over my head. I looked towards young Mallett, but it was too late to save him. The boom struck him full on the head, and he went overboard without a cry.

The word of alarm went like lightning through the ship, and in a few minutes the stern-boat was manned and lowered. I did not get into the boat, for my mate was a more powerful man, and to him I gave the charge. I could see where the youth was still floating—twice he had sunk when the boat reached him, and a long, deep breath escaped me as I saw him lifted from the water. It was a fortunate thing for him that we had but little headway.

When my supercargo was brought on board he was utterly senseless, and a pang shot through my heart as I thought he might be dead. Several of the men helped me to carry him directly to the cabin, and then we laid him in his berth in his own state-room.

"We must have more air," said my mate.

"Then open the window," said I.

The window was accordingly opened.

"Is he dead?" asked one of the men.

I made no answer, but I placed my ear to his lips. I thought I felt a breath. I plucked a bit of light fur from a cap that hung near, and laid it over his mouth.

"It moves! It moves!" cried the mate. "Tear open his vest, captain. Give him full chance to breathe."

Quickly I unbuttoned the youth's vest and placed my hand within to feel if there was any motion above the heart. Great heaven! Had the crash of annihilated creation at that moment sounded in my ears I could not have been more startled. I know not how I looked, or how I acted, but I ordered the men to leave the cabin.

"Go—go!" I gasped. "If I want you I will send for you. Stop not to question me, but go."

When they had gone I went again to the berth,

and my supercargo had begun to breathe more freely. I placed my fingers to that delicately chiselled lip, and the moustache moved beneath my touch, and the next moment it lay upon the floor at my feet.

Fool! dolt! idiot! that I had been! It was Rosamond Mallett who lay there before me! As beautiful as when first I saw her, save that her long, curling tresses were gone! Oh, how could I have been so deceived? And yet others might have been deceived as I was.

As soon as I could collect my senses I sprang to my own state-room and opened my spirit-case. I took a flask of wine and after bathing the girl's brow, I forced some of it between her lips. Soon she opened her eyes—those same dark, lustrous, hazel eyes that had so often enchanted me with their love-light. Oh, how blind I had been!

"Where am I?" came from those pale lips.

"Here—safe," I replied.

She raised her hand to her eyes, and in a few moments she looked into my face.

"My head aches," she said.

I placed my hand upon her brow, and again she closed her eyes.

When she opened them once more, a fearful tremor shook her frame, and she gazed at me long and steadily.

At length a strange light shot athwart her pale features, and she murmured:

"You know me?"

"Yes," I said.

"Leave me now. I shall be better soon. I will ring my bell when I want you. Oh, do not let any one else enter here."

I promised obedience, and, with a wildly fluttering heart I left the state-room, and closed the door after me.

The men crowded about me with anxious inquiries, and I quieted their fears by informing them that the supercargo was safe.

I saw that my mate suspected more than I had told, but he made no remark.

Half-an-hour passed away, and I began to grow uneasy.

I descended to the cabin to listen, but I had not long to wait, for immediately afterwards I heard the tinkle of the bell.

With an anxious, trembling, hesitating step, I entered my supercargo's state-room. At first I was bewildered by the scene that was there revealed. Rosamond was sitting upon the short ottoman at the foot of her berth, arrayed in a female attire of dark silk. Her eyes were turned upon me as I entered, but she soon dropped them and covered her face with her hands. I moved quickly to her side, and laid my hand upon her head. It was some moments before I could speak, but when I did speak my voice was quite calm.

"Rosamond," I said, "you know you may trust most implicitly in me. By an accident I have discovered your secret, but it will only serve to make my trust more sacred. Here, upon my knees, I pledge myself to protect you from all harm. The promise I gave you for your brother shall be doubly kept for you."

"But you will despise me—you will think scornfully of me," murmured the beautiful girl, as I arose to my feet and sat down by her side.

"No, no; I will hold you as sacred as heaven itself."

As I thus spoke, Rosamond's head fell forward upon my bosom. I do not remember what I said, for my words were wild and impassioned. All that I can distinctly remember is, that at the end of some fifteen or twenty minutes she was clasped within my arms, and was smiling upon me through her tears. She had told me that she loved me.

"Ah," I said, "it was a bold step for one like you."

"Bold?" she repeated. "Oh, it was the movement of despair. I was doomed to become the wife of one whom I loathed—one whom I knew to be a man of no principle in morality or virtue. I knew my father's inflexible will, and I knew the influence of my inexorable mother. I had but one step left, and that was flight. In the wild frenzy of the moment, I resolved to take the step I did. I knew you would have little opportunity to see my brother, and that my resemblance to him was so near, that a little disguise might deceive you. I could not sleep that night after you left me at my father's house. I knew then that you loved me, and an emotion more wild than before possessed me. During the night I packed my trunk, and before daylight I removed it from the house and obtained a coach. I called first upon the pilot, and he had not a mistrust of my real character. Then I felt more assured. You did not know me, and I then only feared for the coming of my father before the ship could be got off. You know how narrow that escape was, but you do not know the exquisite torture I suffered, while you hesitated about

keeping on out from the harbour. I have at times felt sorry that I cheated my brother of his voyage, and also that I ran away with his trunk; but then, when I have remembered the dreadful fate I escaped, my regret has changed to thanks. And you, I know, will forgive me for the deceit I have practised upon you. I meant to have continued it through the whole voyage, but fate has ordered it otherwise."

It was no difficult task for me to forgive the gentle being who reclined upon my bosom, nor did she seem to hesitate about confiding in my faith.

After some deliberation it was decided that Rosamond should retain her female attire—an emergency for which she had not forgotten to provide—and appear before the men in her true character; for I knew that the mate suspected the truth, and I thought it probable that the rest of the men would in time get hold of it.

When I went on deck I called the men aft, and in a plain, straightforward way, I told them the whole story. I thought it best to conceal nothing from them, except, indeed, my own peculiar interest in the affair, and I was gratified to find that they all fully sympathised with the girl in her misfortune. When she came on deck she was received with the utmost respect, and that respect not only continued during the whole voyage, but it ripened into a noble disinterested devotion.

Of course my supercargo was relieved from further duty, and I took all the papers into my own care. Is it a wonder that Rosamond and myself sometimes talked of love? And yet I tell the truth, when I say that I had not fully made up my hopes of ever possessing her; for I had made her promise that she would return to her father, and trust her fate in his hands once more. I knew that the old merchant was a man of naturally good feelings, and I believed that the present event would be a lesson not lost upon him. But I must confess, however, that my heart would beat most painfully when I thought that the old gentleman might, after all, overlook my claim in his forgiveness of his child.

Over a year had passed when my ship again entered her home-port. All hands were healthy, and without being subjected to quarantine, I was allowed at once to run up the harbour. I expected that Mr. Mallett would have been the first to come on board, but he did not come. It was dusk when I took Rosamond on shore, and I easily procured a carriage to carry us to her father's dwelling. We spoke not on the way. My heart was too full of doubts and fears, and I could feel that my companion trembled violently.

At length we reached the merchant's mansion, and I rang the door-bell. I asked the servant who answered the summons if Mr. Mallett was at home. He answered in the affirmative, and without further remark or hesitation, I took Rosamond by the hand and conducted her to the drawing-room. The old gentleman was there alone. He started to his feet as we entered, and with a suppressed cry the fair girl sprang towards him. He pressed her to his bosom with an instinctive movement, and his gaze was fixed upon me with a look of calm contempt.

"Captain Palmer," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "you do well to bring me back my child now, now that you have made her worthless. Oh, I dreamed not that you were such a villain."

"Father! father!" cried Rosamond, with all the energy she was mistress of, "you know not what you say. Listen to me. I will tell you all."

"Not in his presence," said the father.

"Then be it where you will; only speak not of him again till you know all."

Mr. Mallett hesitated a few moments, and then he led his daughter from the room. They were gone a long hour, and during that time I suffered more than I can tell.

At length they came back. Rosamond's face beamed with joy, and I could see that big tears had been rolling down the old man's cheeks. Mrs. Mallett came with them, and even she looked more happy than I had ever seen her before.

"Captain Palmer," said the merchant, walking directly to where I stood, and taking my hand, "Rosamond has told me all. Forgive me, if I have wronged you, for I did it ignorantly. Here, take this, and my blessing goes with it."

The old man's voice choked, and he could speak no more; but the thing he gave me was the fair warm hand of his daughter. I tried to speak, but I could not. I clasped Rosamond to my bosom and wept.

Robert Mallett came home in season to see his sister married. He commenced to scold her for the trick she had played upon him; but she placed her hand upon his mouth, and kissed him, and thus she conquered.

And, dear reader, that is the way she always conquers me; but it is a sweet thing to be managed in that manner, and I love it yet.

It has been many years now since I married my supercargo, but heaven knows that I have never had occasion to regret it; for she is still the same sweet, mild creature that I first learned to love, and though her dark tresses are now spangled here and there with rays of silver, yet she looks to me as beautiful as when first I knew her, and I know that I love her better.

A. J. B.

THE LIME-BURNER.

It was not many miles from the town of Arundel that the cottage of John Ward stood. He was a lime-burner, as his father had been before him; and for fifty years, though the Wards had been poor, none could breathe a word against their integrity.

But, of late, trouble had fallen upon the household of John Ward; long sickness, and then death, failure in his little ventures upon the trifle of ground he cultivated, and lastly, the breaking of an arm, an obstinate fracture that kept him for nearly a year unemployed.

He had burnt in the kilns of Chris. Otten, a German, who had come into that part of the country a quarter of a century before, and had by some means got into his hands one of the richest kilns in the country, and had grown rich from it. Otten's wealth did not alone consist of the kiln, but it was said, and with some degree of truth, that he either owned or had a mortgage upon every other piece of ground in the county. It was to Chris. Otten that John Ward went, on the death of his wife, for aid.

So many losses had fallen upon him, that, without aid, he could not bear even the expenses of the funeral, or support his little ones until such time as he should recover the use of his arm and be enabled to labour.

Otten was a man of business, he said. He never lent money without security. John Ward could execute a mortgage to him of the cottage and his ground, and he would lend him what he wanted for one year. John trembled a little, at first, at the proposition, but when he considered that he had always known and heard of Chris. Otten as an honest and just man, and as he felt sure that his arm must be well in a few months, and he could easily earn and save the sum before the year was up, he consented. The mortgage was drawn and John had the money and spent it, not only to inter his wife with that respect and love he had always borne her, but to lighten his own pains and have some medical aid and comfort as would hasten his recovery.

But John Ward's arm would not get well, and so the year slipped away, and he was even worse off than when he had borrowed the money of Mr. Chris. Otten, and had not the first shilling of it saved, and with this tale he was obliged to face his creditor. Mr. Christopher was not nearly-mouthed at all. He asked John Ward how he thought he could live if all men were to treat him so, and many other remarks of the same kind, finally ending off in the declaration that he should foreclose immediately. John was turning away with a heavy heart when Christopher called him back. The old man looked with knitted brows in John's face for a few moments, and then asked him: "You want this mortgage paid off, I suppose?"

Of course he did, but he had not a shilling to pay it with.

"Very well," was Mr. Christopher's response. "Be at home this evening just after dark, and I will come to you. If you have a mind to earn the money to pay it off in a few hours you can do so."

John Ward went away strangely puzzled to know how this was to be accomplished, but finally settled upon the idea that the old man had relented and intended to free him from the mortgage from pure goodness of heart; for how can he, argued John, expect any labour from a man with one arm.

The evening came, and with it Chris. Otten. John could not help observing that there was an uneasy, restless look about the old man's eyes as he entered the house, but he thought nothing of it. He refused to give his hat to little Mary, who offered to take it from his hand, and seating himself in the darkest corner of the room, made a motion to John that the children should leave.

"Send the brats all to bed," he said to him the moment they were outside the door. "I want to have a talk with you, and I don't want anybody within ear-shot."

Ward was puzzled at the whispering, mysterious way in which this was said, and left the room to see that himself and Mr. Otten were left undisturbed.

"Now, then, Ward," said Mr. Christopher, as soon as John had entered the room again, "I'm a man of business, as you know, and so I intend coming right to the point. Do you want that mortgage cleared off, and a hundred pounds in your pocket beside?"

John could only sit in open-mouthed wonder at first, and stare at Mr. Chris. Otten, and afterward get out a faltering "Yes!"

"Very well, then. I can show you how it can be done. You know that I am in a law-suit about the Black Rock Kiln?"

John nodded his head in assent.

"Well, there are some things in that matter that I want to get straight, and you can help me," whispered Mr. Christopher. "Will you do it?"

"Certainly I will, Mr. Otten, if I can, and—and—it's all right," answered John.

Mr. Christopher winced, but returned to the charge: "We'll make it right, Ward—we'll make it right."

You shan't have any cause to complain of my want of liberality. The fact is, you see, I've somehow lost the receipt for the money I paid for the Black Rock Kiln, and now, after nearly sixteen years, old Bard's son puts in a claim to it, and says that I never bought the kiln of his father, but only hired it, a fact that he says didn't become known because of the sudden death of his father. Now, I must have that receipt."

"Where is it?" asked John, in a stupid sort of a way.

"How do I know?" blurted out Mr. Christopher. "It's been lost these twelve years."

"How are you going to get it, then?" asked John again, stupidly.

"Make it!" answered Mr. Christopher, looking with his little grey, wicked eyes right into John Ward's. "Make it, Ward; and I want you to help me!"

John sat like a mummy, and only listened.

"I must have that receipt, with your father's name and your own to it as witnesses. Do you understand now?"

"No!" was John's stolid answer.

"I've got the receipt in my pocket, John Ward, with all the names to it but yours. It is dated fifteen years ago. All I want is for you to sign it, and when it is produced in court verify it by saying that you remember all the transaction at that time, saw the money paid, your father sign the receipt as a witness, and swear to his signature and your own. Do this, John Ward, and your mortgage shall be cancelled, and you shall never know what it is to want money again. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"And you'll do it?"

"Christopher Otten, do you know what crimes you ask me to commit? You are a rich man, and you have me in your power. You can turn me and my children into the road at a moment's notice, perhaps even to die; but I'll welcome that death for myself and for them before I can consent to swear to the forgery of my father's name, and perjury about my own, to defraud a son of his father's property."

"It's not his property," hissed Otten. "It's mine. I've had it for fifteen years, and I'll not give it up, even though the devil stood to claim it. You'd better think of it again, John, before you throw away the chance. Remember, I can turn you out of this house to-morrow, and I'll do it if you refuse."

"And how if I take my revenge by handing you over to the law as a forger and a villain?" was John's rejoinder.

"Why, Ward, you're nothing but a child," said Otten, with a short, bitter laugh. "Where's your witness? Do you think your word will stand against mine? I shall say that I only came to ask you if you could remember the signing of this lost receipt in your presence fifteen years ago. That's all! Ha! ha! ha! I think my word will bear down yours anyway, Mr. John Ward. You'd better think again of this thing. I'll give you until to-morrow noon, and then if you consent, the mortgage is ready for you, with the hundred pounds; yes! two hundred if all's right. If not, out you go before to-morrow's sun sets, and I'll take my chances on all the harm you can do me."

And away went Mr. Chris. Otten, leaving John to think of it; and John did think of it, and the result of the thinking was, that he would take his three motherless children and go out upon the highway before he would in any manner lend himself to the infamous schemes of Mr. Chris. Otten.

The next morning dawned; noon came, and with it came Mr. Chris. Otten, accompanied by two men, who stood outside while he went in to receive John Ward's answer. It was soon given. "No!" And in a few minutes the two men had taken possession in the name of the law, and levied on the few household goods to pay the expenses of foreclosure, should the property not do so, and John Ward found himself upon the road, a helpless man with three children, neither of them old enough to be of any service.

Until that moment he had not considered what he should do in case he was ejected. Now, he felt that resistance was useless, and he could think of nothing else than that a brother of his dead wife lived at Portland, and to him he would go and ask that he should take the children and provide for them until he had recovered strength to labour. It was a long

and cheerless journey to a moneyless man and three children; but it must be done, and so they set forth on the weary trudge.

It was not long before the night fell down and promised a storm. It was the last of October and very cold. John knew that there was no house for many miles on, and that the road passed through a dreary country; but he had provided himself with bread and some cold meat, and he determined to trust to some of the hollows in the hill sides for a night's shelter, and make a bed among the dry leaves. It was not long before they reached an opening that pleased him. It was almost a cavern, and excellently sheltered from the wind. There he made his little ones their beds of dried leaves, built a cheery fire with the fallen sticks, and a few stones for a fire-place, and gave them their supper, and there they all slept, quite as comfortable as though they were under the roof of the old cottage.

Another morning, bright and cheerful, peeped in through the opening on John Ward and his little ones. The father was turning over the coals that he might build up a good blaze and give them a thorough warming, and the balance of the bread and meat before setting out on their second day's tramp, when his eyes were startled and riveted on the stones which he had used the night before to build his fire-place. Upon the side turned to the flame, they had grown white, and John Ward seized one of the smallest, and hastened to the mouth of the opening to view it by the light. Yes; it was lime, and within a few feet of where he stood, lay incalculable heaps of the same calcareous wealth. It was a plunge at once from the lowest stage of poverty to riches. It was the discovery of gold, the hidden gems of a mine.

The first instinct of John Ward was prayer, the next to carry the burnt stones away, lest any chance passer-by should straggle in, and thereby get the benefit of what had been so wonderfully revealed to him in his great want. This done, John Ward set forward with a light heart toward Portland.

A few days after, the lime-burner's children were ensconced in the comfortable horse of their uncle at Portland, and John Ward and his wife's brother had departed to find the owner of the land on which the treasure had been discovered. He was found, a rich and liberal merchant, who, in the multiplicity of his possessions, had almost forgotten the tract of land. He heard the story of John Ward, and then, like a true man, as he was, not only declined taking advantage of the discovery, but as soon as he could write and learn the character of John, drew up a bill of sale for the spot, giving him five years in which to pay the money, and advanced him one thousand pounds to build his kiln, and commence working.

Ten years have elapsed since that time, and the once wild spot where was the opening, now stirs with life.

It is not only one of the largest kilns, but the best-conducted in the country, and that fine, substantial stone house upon the hill, so beautifully surrounded with shrubbery, belongs to John Ward, as does most of the property within a mile or two of it; and what is more, while all his workmen admit him to be an unexceptionable master, not one who helped him in the hour of his struggles can say he has proved ungrateful.

The Black Rock Kiln has passed back into the family of the Bards, and Mr. Christopher Otten, after spending one-half of his wealth in attempting to keep it from the rightful owners, had the other half taken to pay up the amount that the heirs were entitled to for the fifteen years' working, after which he passed out of that part of the country, and was heard of no more.

J. N. W.

GARIBALDI AND THE PARISIANS.—General Garibaldi was very nearly having an ovation from Paris, but the police, hearing that addresses were being signed, were down on the documents and the signatories.

SUPPLY OF FLAX.—Mr. Baker, Inspector of Factories, reports the flax trade in a state of the greatest activity. In Ireland the area sown increased last year by 61,000 acres. The total flax culture of the United Kingdom is now estimated at about 250,000 acres, capable of producing nearly 70,000 tons of flax. But the actual average consumption was estimated in 1862 at 100,000 tons, with as much more wanted; it is supposed that the consumption has now risen to 149,000 tons, and if the spindles ordered in Belfast and Leeds come into operation, our total consumption will be nearly 170,000 tons in a year. The import has of late years averaged about 78,600 tons; but the import of 1863 was below the average. There is no reason, however, why we should not grow it all for ourselves, and it is a very profitable crop. If every farmer in the United Kingdom grew but two acres of flax, the production would amount to 200,000 tons. It is obvious that linen might become again an article of general use instead of being a luxury.

A CIRCULAR has been issued by the Board of Admiralty, directing that in future no person shall be entered for service in the Royal Navy unless he has been vaccinated, or is willing to undergo the operation immediately. Every man or boy volunteering for the service who has not had the small-pox nor been vaccinated, or who presents a doubtful cicatrix, shall be sent to hospital to have the operation performed, and should there be no naval hospital within reach, he shall be vaccinated on board the ship at the earliest opportunity, as soon as lymph can be procured. It might be supposed that such a necessary precaution as this had been long since adopted, but such does not appear to be the case, and the disease has appeared in several ships, at home and abroad, within the last few months.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN Menard began to comprehend what had so long been going on before his eyes, he passed through many phases of feeling. He was amazed, bewildered, and lastly furious that this penniless stranger should aspire to the hand of his daughter. It was a pet scheme of his to return to France at the close of the following year, taking Sylvie with him; and there, with her beauty and fortune, she might make a brilliant alliance.

He thought her pride had led her to refuse his nephew, and he had not dreamed that a man without either home or fortune could ever render himself acceptable to her.

Menard was a man of quick temper and but little perseverance; yet on this provocation his wrath was so great that his daughter began to fear it would assume the form of obstinacy. She used all her wiles—tried every art of persuasion without effect; but when he threatened to kick her presumptuous lover out of doors, the fire that lay smouldering within her blazed forth. With flashing eyes and curling lip, she said:

"Do so, monsieur, if you will; but know that I shall go with him as his wife. Since you will not listen to reason, I shall take my fate in my own hands."

"Go, then, ungrateful that you are! Leave your old and doting father for the specious stranger, who has abused my hospitality by secretly winning the affections of my child. Live with him in poverty and obscurity, for I will give you nothing."

"You will surrender to me the estate of my mother which the law gives to me," she haughtily replied. "I am well aware, monsieur, that the greater portion of the wealth you claim was derived from my maternal grandfather, and you cannot alienate it from me."

This was a fact of which Menard had lost sight in his bitter wrath.

When he came a poor adventurer to Barbadoes, the wealth of Antoine Ledru had tempted him to take his quadroon daughter as his wife, and at least half of his present estate belonged legitimately to her child.

"So, you would also strip me of my fortune," he screamed, "and give it to this vagabond, who will dissipate it, no doubt, and probably break your heart?"

"I will take that risk," she resolutely replied. "I have faith in my betrothed. He is a gentleman by birth, and a man of noble and refined feeling."

"Refined foolery! He has turned your head with his sentimental nonsense, and you are ready to throw yourself away in this absurd manner. You! for whom I had planned so different a destiny. Listen to me, Sylvie! I have hoarded money to enable me to live in princely splendour in my native land. I will return to France, purchase an estate, and give you a palace in Paris. You shall have everything that heart can desire if you will only give up this degrading marriage."

Her lip curled contemptuously.

"My heart desires but one thing, and that is the love you bid me repudiate. I have no wish to live in Paris; I prefer the wild freedom of my native island to the trammels of fashionable life. Make up your mind to this marriage, father, for I have set my heart upon it, and you know that I am not used to bend my will to that of another."

"Yes," he feebly groaned, "I know that but too well; I have permitted you to do as you please, till I have no longer any control over you. If you will stoop so low as to marry my agent, why did you not take Basil? He was my nephew, and your fortune could at least have benefited my own family."

"Because I did not love him, and I do love M. Vernor."

Menard walked up and down the long hall in which this conversation took place during the absence of Vernor. He tore his hair, performed a frantic dance,

and finally resorted to his pipe and his hammock for consolation.

When he grew calmer, Sylvie approached him and spoke with the defiant pride that characterized her:

"When my betrothed returns, treat him with the respect that is due to him and to me. If you insult him by expressing your opposition to our union as freely as you have done to me, I will seek another home. I will go to the Ledru Place, which belongs to me, and take up my abode with old Cecile, till my marriage can take place."

Menard looked helplessly at her; his rage had exhausted itself, and he felt himself at the mercy of his determined adversary. He gloomily muttered:

"Since you will have it so, I must give you my consent, I suppose. But you really know nothing of this young man. He may not be what he represents himself; he may have been exiled for a worse offence than a political one. Oh, Sylvie! do not break my heart by making an unhappy marriage!"

"I believe implicitly what he has told me, and I will marry him or no other," was the firm response. "Such is my confidence in him that I will endow him, without reservation, with all I possess."

The old man clasped his hands despairingly, and the rebellious daughter swept away to her own apartment with the triumphant consciousness of victory.

Menard knew it to be useless to struggle against her determination, and he resigned himself to what he felt to be inevitable with the best grace he could assume. He adored his daughter, and he trembled at her threat to leave him if he persisted in his opposition.

With outward respect, but internal distrust, Vernor was received as his future son-in-law, and the homeless exile found himself the prospective possessor of a lovely wife dowered with at least a hundred thousand pounds, the half of which would become his on the day of their union.

He did not pause to ask himself if time had been given to sever his former bonds. His lot was cast in this far-away place, in an island subject to a foreign power, and it was not likely that any one should stray from his former home who could betray the treachery of which he had been guilty. At the worst, if this should happen, he could legalize his union with Sylvie by a second ceremony when the divorce between himself and Ethel was pronounced. With this sophistry he silenced the few scruples that arose, and gave himself up to the joy of loving and being loved with an ardour seldom equalled. He was passionately enamoured of his beautiful fiancée, and she demonstrated her attachment to him with a freedom unknown to women of a colder clime.

This frankness charmed Vernor, and riveted the chains in which she held him even more firmly than before. A few delicious weeks of happiness passed away on wings of light, and the bridal day drew near. The wedding was to be private; a priest was to come from the neighbouring town to perform the ceremony, and the lovers were to make a bridal excursion in the yacht to the island of Cuba.

On the evening before their marriage, Vernor and his betrothed stood together on the piazza looking out upon the moonlit sea, and discussing their future plans. Suddenly Sylvie asked:

"Have you never loved before, *mon bien aimé*?"

"Never; you are the only woman I have ever cared to make my wife. My first and only love is yours."

"It is well that is so, for I am terribly jealous. I warn you that you must be devoted and faithful to me alone, or I know not what may happen. I have trusted you implicitly; if you betray that trust, woe be unto you."

He laughed a little uneasily.

"Why, my angel, how tragic you are! Pray don't try to make me afraid of the yoke I am about to assume. I adore you—I shall never care for another. Does not that assurance satisfy your exacting heart?"

She regarded him with eyes brimming with tears, for a sudden dread had fallen upon her, and a faint premonition of the fate she was preparing for herself, came as a cloud over the brightness of her happiness. She mournfully said:

"It should—it must. But to-morrow you assume a fearful responsibility. I am wayward, passionate, and capable of the direst revenge if I find that I have been deceived or outraged in any manner. You came to us a stranger, and I have trusted you with the life of my life. Oh! Vernor, if you prove unworthy of my confidence, our fate will be a fearful one!"

A cold thrill penetrated his heart as he listened to her words, and he felt his cheeks grow pale beneath her glance. With great effort he repeated:

"Our fate: since you unite us in one common doom, my Sylvie, I can brave it, let it be what it may. Even to die with you, my best-beloved, is better than to live for any other woman; and to gain the happiness of making you mine, I will risk even that."

The shadow passed from her brow, and she whispered:

"Only love me thus for ever, for ever, and I ask no more."

With his consummate tact, Vernor said everything that could allay the passing cloud, and the deceived and hapless girl went to her room with a heart almost oppressed with its ineffable sense of happiness.

A brilliant morning dawned on the island home of M. Menard. At an early hour the house was astir, and the yacht, gaily decorated with streamers in honour of the occasion, lay in the cove below the house. The priest had passed the night at Bellevue, and a few intimate friends were invited to witness the marriage.

With but few misgivings, which were quickly silenced, Vernor prepared for the ceremony which was to give him a second wife before the first was legally separated from him. He believed that Sylvie would never learn the treachery of which she was about to be made the victim, and he knew himself so little as to imagine that he could always remain contented in the sylvan paradise into which he had come as the serpent of old came into the garden of Eden. He fancied that his passion for Sylvie would be as lasting as life itself; that he could reconcile himself to the seclusion which was so foreign to his habits for many years past.

Two months had elapsed since he came to Barbadoes, and time had flown by on rapid wings, but he forgot that he had been occupied with an engrossing passion, and when the zest of that should pass away as the sparkle upon the wine, his restless nature would seek some new avenue of enjoyment probably inconsistent with the serene happiness of domestic life.

Let the future betide what it might, Vernor was ready to risk all where he was to gain so much, and when Sylvie came forth radiant with love and happiness, he exultingly clasped her willing hand and drew her before the officiating ecclesiastic.

The ceremony was soon performed, and Vernor led his bride to the head of the table, on which a magnificent *déjeuner* was spread. The poor old father endeavoured to look happy and pleased, but it was a dismal effort at cheerfulness, for he vaguely mistrusted this stranger who had won his child from him, and he dreaded what the future might bring forth.

The planter was not to accompany the newly-wedded pair upon their tour. He declared himself unable to leave home at this crisis, and to the great satisfaction of the young couple, they were to enjoy their happiness uninterrupted by his gloomy presence.

Breakfast over, the whole party prepared to accompany the bridal pair to the yacht. As they issued from the house a fierce-looking man of fine proportions, and much masculine beauty of person, was crossing the lawn with rapid steps. His brow was stern and his lips compressed as he advanced directly toward Sylvie. She met his eyes with a laughty expression of surprise, and exclaimed:

"Basil! What brings you hither now, and where have you been so long?"

"You have not found it long, it seems," he said, speaking through his closed teeth, "for in the interval you have given me a rival. Is it true, Sylvie Menard, that you have bested your land on the man who stands beside you?"

"I have—and what concern is it of yours?"

"It should be much, for you are of my blood, and dearer to me than all the world contains. You have preferred the stranger known to you but a few brief weeks, when the love of years was scorned. Look to it that he does not repay you with a broken heart. You know not who he is, and whence he came: his race is not ours, and perfidy is the birth-right of his nation. Oh! Sylvie! you have doomed me to despair in thus throwing yourself away!"

Her eyes flashed, and she was about to make a bitter retort, when Vernor spoke:

"Monsieur, this lady is now my wife, and such language with reference either to myself or my country I will not tolerate. Stand aside, and let us pass on our way."

Basil glared on him a moment, and then slowly said:

"I will make it the business of my life to find out who and what you are, who have imposed yourself on an old man and an inexperienced girl. You have won their confidence, and torn from me the hopes of my life. Pass on, M. Anglais, but I am on your track, and if you prove unworthy of the good fortune you have won—beware!"

In spite of his efforts to control himself, Vernor became deadly pale at the utterance of this threat. He raised his hand menacingly, to which Basil replied by a gesture of contempt, and the priest stepped between them. He spoke soothingly to the excited intruder:

"Come with me, Basil. Your disappointment has made you unreasonable. With the consent of her father, Sylvie is the wife of M. Vernor, and any attempt to injure her husband can only render her unhappy. You will think better of this idle menace."

"Perhaps so, father Pierre; but it moves him strangely. See how he changes colour."

"If I do," replied Vernor, defiantly, "it is with indignation at this outrage. But I can forgive you, M. Basil, since I have succeeded where you have failed. Good day; seek out my antecedents, if you choose, and make the most of them." You will find little food for your malice in so doing.

He drew the hand of Sylvie beneath his arm, and proudly strode away, followed by all the party save the priest and Basil. Menard whispered a few words in the ear of the latter, and then joined the procession to the yacht.

In another hour the little vessel glided from the cove with every sail set, bearing two happy and exulting hearts within her.

If poor Sylvie's dream was brief, it was entrancing, and she gave herself up to her now-found happiness with a childlike abandon, that rendered her more enchanting than ever to Vernor.

He cast aside the momentary uneasiness produced by Basil's threat, for he believed that under his change of name he could safely defy a stranger and a foreigner to trace his family in his native land, or to identify him as the husband of another woman.

The weather was charming, and the fairy bark sailed over smooth seas, lighted at night by a tropical moon, and the days passed all too swiftly away to the two who were all the world to each other.

Sylvie wished they could thus sail on for ever; they reached Cuba after a delightful voyage, and after spending a week in Havana, went into the interior of the island, and explored some of its most romantic recesses.

Their trip back was without accident, and after an absence of two months Vernor and his bride again landed in safety at Bellevue.

Vernor had been apprehensive that he should find Basil there installed as superintendent in his place; but the young creole had refused the place which his uncle had again offered him: he could not live beneath the same roof with Sylvie, and see her daily as the wife of another.

He stated to Menard that, with a little assistance, he could establish himself in a lucrative business in the island of St. Croix, and the old man, as a panacea to his wounded heart, advanced the sum he required, but with a positive understanding with his nephew that no portion of it was to be devoted to the threatened visit to England.

Since his daughter had married this stranger, Menard wished no efforts to be made to bring discord between herself and her husband. If Vernor had been guilty of wrong-doing, it was best that Sylvie should never be made aware of it, and Basil pledged himself not to act on the threat he had made; but in his heart was a deep-seated feeling of rancour toward his rival, and he held himself in readiness to strike a blow at him whenever the opportunity should arrive.

CHAPTER XXXI

WITH a rapid pen we must now sketch the life of Vernor and Sylvie for the next four years.

For a few months he was passionately devoted to her; but her exacting temper—her unreasonable jealousy if he showed even ordinary attention to the young girls who occasionally visited at Bellevue, gradually alienated him.

He soon felt that he was becoming a slave to the caprices of an imperious woman, and he openly rebelled against the thraldom to which he had willingly submitted in the early days of their union.

Stormy scenes ensued, usually ending in a reconciliation, and, for a brief season, the renewal of their former tenderness; but each one cooled the ardour of Vernor's attachment till, with the natural inconstancy of his temperament, he almost regretted the fate which had thrown him on the path of his divine Sylvie.

He forgot all he owed to her, and at moments even secretly exulted in the thought that, in all probability, the tie that bound him to her was not legal. Sylvie's attachment, on the contrary, seemed to gain strength with every passing day.

His coldness provoked her jealousy and her fears, but it had no power to change the devoted love which she had bestowed upon him.

She tormented him, she tyrannized over him, but she adored him; and he began dimly comprehend that the words she uttered on the night previous to their union would be acted on if the provocation were given.

New causes of discord soon arose. Vernor wearied of the monotony of plantation life. He no longer had any business to occupy him, as he considered it beneath his dignity to act as agent since he had married the heiress, and a substitute was found.

He strayed away to Bridgetown, and sometimes prolonged his absence several days in the congenial com-

pany of the dissipated young men of wealth in the vicinity who found time hang heavily upon their hands.

They established a race-course, patronized a gambling saloon, at which Vernor lost heavily, and, worse than all, he frequently returned to his wife in a state of oblivion as to what had happened to him.

Sylvie wept over him, nursed him tenderly through his fits of intoxication, and then stormed at him for so degrading himself. At first he replied with equal fire, but gradually he listened with apathy to her reproaches, and sat unmoved by her tears.

That portion of her fortune which Menard had surrendered to him was rapidly melting away in his hands, and the old planter saw with dismay the boards he had accumulated by years of industry scattered by the careless hand of a prodigal.

He beheld his worst fears confirmed—his daughter was not happy in her ill-omened union, and if Vernor was permitted to go on in this reckless way she would be ruined.

Yet, when he ventured to speak with Sylvie on this subject, she declared with vehemence that what was hers also belonged to the man she loved, and he was free to do with it as he pleased—even to squander it in vices and follies, which must in time disgust him, and he would yet return to her with the loving heart he had once pledged to her.

Her father cherished no such hope, but he refrained from urging her to a course of action which would certainly produce an open rupture; for the old man began bitterly to feel that the wealth of his daughter had been as great a temptation to Vernor to marry her as her own attractions.

Had Sylvie's children lived, she might have been more anxious for the preservation of her property, but of the two that were born in the first three years of their union, both died a few hours after their birth, and these successive afflictions only added strength to her attachment to their father.

She clung to him with that blind, passionate ardour which was the gift of her temperament and her race; Vernor was her world, her all, and life without him would be worthless, wretched as he often made it.

The revolution in England which placed William III. on the throne had taken place many months before it was known in Barbadoes, for at that day intercourse between the continent of Europe and the colonies was much less frequent than now.

One morning, after a scene of passionate recrimination between Vernor and Sylvie, he bitterly said:

"You will force me to leave you at last, for I will not stand the life you lead me."

He rushed out, mounted his horse, and rode rapidly in the direction of Bridgetown, leaving her filled with remorse and terror, lest he should execute his threat.

When he reached the town, he found that a French ship had entered the port, and there seemed to be great commotion at the news she brought. Vernor heard with joy, that the Prince of Orange was now King of England, and he thought with triumph that he might now return to his native land, and possibly regain his inheritance. Under a new ruler the adherents of Monmouth would not be severely dealt with, and with that hardness of nature that springs from a long course of self-indulgence, he scarcely gave a thought to the hapless woman who had given him her all, yet whom he was ready to offer up as a sacrifice to his own aggrandizement.

Sylvie had ceased to be attractive to him. She annoyed and tormented him, and if he could reclaim his title and estates, he would find means to evade her in such a manner as to leave no clue by which she could trace him. Deeply revolving these possibilities in his busy brain, Vernor wandered from the crowd, and slowly walked towards the place of usual rendezvous for himself and his friends. Suddenly he was startled by a voice exclaiming close beside him:

"Halloa, Methurn! can this possibly be you, alive and well? I thought you had gone down among the mermaids long ago!"

Vernor raised his startled eyes, and recognized a young Frenchman with whom he had been on intimate terms while travelling in Europe. He grasped the hand of his former friend, and said:

"I am glad to meet you again, Bertrand, but do not call me by that name, if you please. I am known here by my baptismal one alone, for reasons you can well understand. Come with me to a place where we can speak in private, and I will tell you of my strange adventures since we last met."

"I am at your service, old fellow, for I am travelling for amusement, and have nothing particular to attend to. It is a perfect godsend to meet with an old friend in this out-of-the-way place. The news came to me that you had been lost in the prison ship in which you were transported. A most infamous sentence too it was against a gentleman; but the old tyrant that ruled England has been well paid for all that."

"I am glad both on his account and my own, that James Stuart has met with his deserts. I can now go back with safety, and claim my own."

"There's not much chance of the last, I am afraid. You have not, then, heard from your family in all these years? Yet how should you, for they are all firmly persuaded of your death?"

"I have taken no pains to let them know that I am still living. Those I left behind me cared as little to hear from me as I from them."

"So you really have given up that pretty baroness, with her fine fortune, to your lucky cousin? I am just from England, where I sought the acquaintance of Sir Gerald Methurn, that I might inquire if anything had ever been heard from you. He and his betrothed bride were in London, preparing for the wedding, which is to come off at Clifden at Christmas."

Vernor flushed and then grew pale. He faltered:

"What do you mean? Has my cousin assumed the title which belongs to me? And Ethel—has she really become the heiress of her family estates?"

"She is now Lady Clifton, and your cousin served the new king so well in many ways, that your father's property has been restored to him with permission to assume the title. Of course, he believed you had perished, as everyone else did."

This was a stunning blow to Vernor, and after a pause of confused thought, he hoarsely asked:

"Do you know if any legal steps were taken to dissolve the marriage between Ethel and myself?"

"Ah, I had forgotten that you were really married to her. No divorce was demanded, for the news of your death rendered it superfluous. If I were in your place I would return to France on the ship that brought me out, travel from there to England as fast as possible, put an end to the wedding preparations, and claim the bonniest bride in all Britain."

"But I have ties here that it will be difficult to break."

"What! you have found a *chère amie*? That is bad, for these tropical women are the dence for jealousy, and sometimes they are capable of doing terrible things."

Vernor felt this himself, and after conducting Bertrand to a cabaret he frequented, and entering a private room, he there, under the strictest seal of secrecy, unfolded to him the exact position in which he stood.

The Frenchman listened with deep interest, and at the close of the narration, said:

"It is lucky that your true name is unknown here; but I reverse my former advice. Since you love this beautiful creole, stay where fate has cast you, and give up the uncertain chances of success if you should return to England. Lady Clifton may refuse to return to her allegiance to you; and besides, your present wife might follow you, and have you prosecuted for bigamy."

"She could not do that. She knows nothing of my former life, and as Mr. Vernor she could never trace me."

"But I understand you to say that you are attached to her. She is rich, you said, and beautiful; and from my own observation, I can assure you that the fair baroness is so much in love with your cousin, that she will not readily consent to be claimed by you."

Vernor ground his teeth in silent rage at this suggestion.

That Gerald, who in his heart he had always considered socially his inferior; for whom he had for years cherished a deep-seated dislike, because his industry and honourable course had been a reproach to himself; that he should have achieved such good fortune, was a bitter humiliation.

Bertrand was a giddy Frenchman, with little sympathy and less principle; but he had a keen eye to interest, and in his subsequent conversations with Vernor he dwelt on the advantages of not sacrificing a certain good for an uncertain chance, and Vernor was almost persuaded to remain satisfied with his present position.

When the stranger visited Bellevue and saw Sylvie, he gave it as his decided opinion that his friend would be mad to forsake such a woman, for in her anger and despair she would be capable of taking any vengeance upon him.

Bertrand departed for a neighbouring island, leaving Vernor to brood over the revelations he had made, and his dissatisfaction hourly increased.

Sylvie's fortune was almost exhausted, and he knew that Menard would never permit him to encroach on his.

The planter's health had failed him greatly within the last few months, and Vernor speculated on the chances of his speedy death.

If the old man were removed, the wealth Sylvie must inherit would be a fair equivalent for that he relinquished with the hand of Ethel: if he lived much longer his position would become unendurable to one of his temper and habits.



[BASIL MENARD THREATENS VERNOR.]

A few mornings after the departure of Bertrand, Menard was found dead in his bed, and Vernor, made up his mind to remain on the island. But when his will was opened, its contents reduced his son-in-law to such a state of dependence upon Sylvie, that he was resolute to risk everything sooner than remain with her on such terms.

The whole estate was irrevocably settled on Sylvie; trustees were appointed to manage it, and to pay over to her a quarterly allowance, which was amply sufficient to enable her to live in the style to which she had been accustomed, but not to furnish Vernor with the large sums he was in the habit of squandering. If she violated the conditions of the will, the estate was to go to Basil Menard, as the next of kin, and a small annuity was to be paid to Sylvie.

The papers of the deceased planter showed that he had already paid over to his son-in-law every penny to which Sylvie was legally entitled as the heiress of her mother; and the property he had accumulated by his own thrift was his to dispose of as he pleased.

There was no possibility of evading the settlement thus made, and after an interview with Sylvie, in which he passionately accused her of having instigated her father to the course he had pursued, that he might be rendered entirely dependent upon herself, Vernor left the house in a paroxysm of rage, which soon terminated in the firm resolve to leave Barbadoes at all hazards, and return to Europe in the French ship, which was still in port, receiving a cargo of sugar for Bordeaux.

His arrangements were secretly made, and under cover of night he went on board of the ship, a few hours before she set sail. A letter for Sylvie was left behind him. It was received on the following day, and read with emotions of despair and anger it would be vain to attempt to pourtray. This heartless and cruel effusion ran thus:

"SYLVIE.—We can no longer be happy together; we are not suited to each other, and the caprices of your violent temper have alienated the love I have felt for you. I do not deny that I once adored you with passionate fervour—you know that I did—and you can measure the extent of my infatuation when I tell you that it tempted me to commit a great wrong against you.

"Sylvie, forgive me, for when I made you mine I was already the husband of another. My bride was but a child, and I had never claimed her, but family reasons gave her my hand years before we met. In extenuation of my crime against you, I must state that I believed legal measures had been taken after my exile to release my first wife from her bonds; but I

have lately learned that it was not so. The tie that binds us together is a rope of sand, for it is not now even strengthened by love on my part. I will not say whose fault this is, for I have often been to blame myself, but if you will recall your violence, your jealousy, and the many bitter words that have passed between us, you will comprehend that I am but too willing to avail myself of the chance that offers itself to escape from your imperious thralldom.

"A new king reigns in England, and it will be safe for me to return there. It will be useless for you to follow me, for you can never trace me. You have never known my true name, nor the position I once held. Be reasonable, if you can; give up a man to whom no legal tie binds you, and seek that happiness with another which you have failed to find with me.

"If it had been possible for us to live together in peace, this should never have been made known to you, for I do not love the bride to whom I am now returning. No—you, and you alone, have I ever loved, and if that knowledge can console you, let it do so. I shall never love another, but I can find in ambition a substitute for that evanescent passion.

"Adieu, Sylvie, for on this side of the grave we shall meet no more.

When the first paroxysms of Sylvie's despair subsided, an intense and burning desire for revenge upon him who had so cruelly wronged her took possession of her wild heart.

Just at this crisis, when she was revolving her plans, and seeking in her own mind for some one to assist her in carrying them out, Basil arrived. He had heard of his uncle's declining health, and came to visit him.

The news of his death, and Sylvie's abandonment by her supposed husband, reached him as soon as he landed, and he hurried to Bellevue to offer such assistance as she might stand in need of.

When he was admitted into her presence, he was shocked at the change in her appearance. He recalled the radiant being he had last seen in the flush of her exulting happiness, and compared her with the wan woman before him, with the fires of despair and incipient insanity blazing in her large black eyes.

She pointed to a seat, and spoke in a hollow tone:

"You have been sent hither to aid me, Basil, when you were most wanted. Keep the vow you made that fatal day—seek the treacherous deceiver through the world, help me to bring him to justice for his inexpiable wrong toward me, and ask your own reward."

He slowly said:

"Would you give me yourself, Sylvie?"

"If you still value the wreck I have become, I will do even that, if you will help me to vengeance on him. Oh, Basil, my heart is broken, my brain is going wild. Let us follow him at once—we shall find a clue—I know we shall."

"Yes, I am sure of that, for such wickedness as this will never be suffered to go unpunished. You must take something to compose you, Sylvie. You are in danger of an attack of fever, and that would not advance our plans. I swear fidelity to you. I will go with you on this quest, and never leave you till I find and punish him we both have such cause to loathe."

She took his hand between her burning ones, and feverishly asked:

"When shall we set out? We must lose no time, for I cannot bear an hour's delay. Is there any ship in port for France?"

"No, but there is the yacht. We can sail to Jamaica in her, and there we shall be sure to find an English bark. We may yet outstrip Vernor in reaching his native land."

"Lose no time, then, in making the necessary arrangements for our voyage. Get money from my merchant, and have all ready by to-morrow, if it is possible to do so."

Basil promised to do his best, and he returned to Bridgetown, having first ordered the captain of the yacht to sail there for the stores necessary to be taken in. The little vessel had been kept in order, and many excursions had been made in her by Sylvie since her marriage, so there was no delay in getting her ready for sea.

On the second morning after Vernor's departure, she set sail for Jamaica, with the two cousins on board; and if anything could have aggravated the wretchedness of Sylvie, it was being confined to the same vessel which had been as a fairy paradise to her in that blissful bridal trip with him she was now ready to sacrifice to the brooding spirit of revenge which had taken possession of her heart.

They reached Jamaica in safety; found there an English ship bound for Liverpool, on which a passage was immediately secured. The voyage proved tempestuous; the ship was driven from her course, and was finally wrecked upon the coast near Lyme. The passengers and crew were rescued; Menard also succeeded in saving the money he had brought with him, and the two strangers, bound on such a quest, did not find themselves destitute upon a foreign shore.

(To be continued.)



[RUY LEOL OVERHEARS IMPORTANT SECRETS.]

ISLA GRANDE.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY.

THE jealous pirate queen and our hero landed near the castle of Senor Nerle, after a long row. Ruy had said enough to her to make her suspect that there was some connection between the elegant and retired senor and her truant husband, and she had begun to think that she would find the pirate visiting Nerle.

"You must show me the way," she said, on landing. "Hide the boat, and lead me to the entrance of the castle—to the most secret entrance, if there is one. Dios! how dark it is! The tempest will soon be upon us!"

Ruy was anxious to hurry home to his foster-father to explain his own absence and see if Iolet had come back. Not having heard or seen anything of her among the pirates, he began to hope strongly that only some ordinary accident had happened to her, and that she was now at home. His sense of indebtedness to the pirate queen, however, in addition to his promise, caused him to oblige her, and he hastened to conduct her to the castle.

They reached the private entrance through which Senor Nerle had taken Iolet, and Senora Calloearras, or "the senora," as she was called by the pirates, tried key after key of the bunch she had exhibited to Ruy, in the endeavour to open the door in the wall.

"I'm afraid that this is not the place my husband visits," she soon said, in a disappointed tone. "The keys don't seem to fit."

"Even if he visited here," returned Ruy, "he would hardly be likely to possess a key to the senor's private gate. Besides, Senor Nerle is highly esteemed as a true and good man, who would hardly associate with men known to be pirates."

The senora uttered an exclamation. She had found a key that fitted the lock. Her joy was equalled by Ruy's astonishment.

"This convinces me that my husband visits here," she said. "Senor Nerle may or may not know who and what his guest is. Come!"

She passed inside, Ruy following, and left the gate unlocked behind them, finding themselves in the wilderness of floral sweets, belonging to Senor Nerle's private garden.

"Is there a private door into the castle?" asked the senora, pausing under the shadow of a dwarf palm-tree. "There must be an opening off this garden."

Ruy went toward the castle, soon discovering the

private door, and the senora approached it with her keys.

She soon found one to fit the lock. "This is more than chance," thought Ruy; "it is fate."

"You must come in with me," said the senora, opening the door. "Let us enter."

Although anxious to be at home, curiosity, in connection with other emotions, drew Ruy on, and he followed the woman into the castle.

"We will not lock the door," she whispered, as Ruy closed it. "Let it pass for inadvertence. The gate and door being both open will favour our escape, if necessary."

This mode of entering a man's house was repugnant to Ruy's high sense of honour, but he was impelled to proceed as much by a desire to know if the pirate was really concealed there as by his promise to the senora.

The woman had brought with her a dark lantern, which she now lighted, and flashed around her.

The frescoed ceiling, the painted walls, the mosaic floor of black and white marble, all appeared to make their impression upon her mind, for a sudden change came over her countenance, and she continued her investigations still more closely than before.

They passed through magnificent rooms, that could vie with the most sumptuous royal palaces—through the large and splendid library—through a smoking-room, fitted up like a Turkish mosque, and then, having met no one, they stole up the broad front staircase. The senora proceeded to the first door she saw, and having opened it, found herself in an apartment fitted up to exactly resemble the better sort of Swiss chalet. Adjoining this was a room looking as though it had been transplanted from a Moorish palace.

It was evident to the intruders as they passed through the suite of rooms, that every apartment was intended to present a type of the best rooms of every country, and the display of wealth was beyond computation—gorgeous—astounding.

Upon Ruy all this splendour was without effect, he having read too much, and his mind being too well balanced to feel more than a passing admiration for it. The senora, however, surveyed it all with a frowning brow and with gathering blackness on her face. Sometimes she darted forward to grasp a lace curtain, or examine a dainty ornament, with an exclamation of wonder and recognition, from which Ruy concluded that her husband had contributed to the furnishing of the castle with his ill-gotten goods.

At length they reached a locked door on the opposite side of the wide hall.

It was the door of Iolet's prison.

"It is the first chamber we have found locked," said the woman, suspiciously, after trying the knob. "Perhaps he is in there?"

She put her ear to the keyhole and listened, but heard nothing.

"I'll see what it is," she said, grimly, setting down her lantern and trying a key. "I'll search it!"

She was now fiercely jealous, and toiled with a will. After a vain trial of several of the keys, she found the one she wanted, and opened the door. The next moment she and Ruy entered the chamber.

By the full light of a large astral lamp on a centre table, they distinguished a reclining figure on the divan by the window.

It was poor Iolet, who had wept herself asleep.

"Ah, I see!" exclaimed the senora, her eyes flashing with jealous fury. "This is what keeps him from me!"

"My God!" exclaimed Ruy, rushing toward the sleeping girl; "it is my sister!"

His words and embrace awakened Iolet, who started to her feet, and looked wildly around her.

Her joy and relief on beholding Ruy were beyond description.

"How came you here, Iolet?" asked Ruy, looking into the eyes of his foster sister. "What are you doing in Senor Nerle's castle?"

The pirate queen half-drew a jewelled dagger from her belt, and made a menacing gesture at the captive, as Iolet replied:

"I was going home, brother, when I met Senor Nerle. He stopped me and asked me to be his wife, as he had done once before. I refused, as kindly as I could, and then he brought me here, where he shut me up; I haven't seen him since."

"Oh, it's Senor Nerle, is it?" muttered the jealous senora, replacing her dagger. "I didn't know but it might be some one else. Tell me, girl," she added, eyeing Iolet's fresh young beauty with an unsatisfied gaze, "has any one else ever said words of love to you besides this Senor Nerle—any guest of his?"

"No."

"And have you seen any strange-looking visitor here?"

"No," replied Iolet, in surprise.

"Is it possible that Senor Nerle can be guilty of kidnapping you?" ejaculated Ruy, recovering from his astonishment; "it seems incredible!"

"I know it, brother," said the girl; "but, notwithstanding his religious ways and his usual gentlemanly conduct, he is a bold, bad man. I am afraid to stay longer in his castle. Let us go."

Ruy looked inquiringly toward the senora.

"Yes, go," she commanded, her face disfigured by its intensely jealous expression. "Leave me here. I mean to have an interview with this Senor Nerle. I will lie in wait for him."

She extended her lantern to our hero, and the brother and sister were delighted to accept it and obey her. Bidding her adieu, they closed the door, which they heard locked behind them, and stole cautiously away from it. They passed down the staircase, and Ruy then attempted to retrace the route by which he had come, but he soon found himself, hand-in-hand with Iole, proceeding through an entirely different corridor from any he had traversed.

"We're off our course," he whispered, "but we will go on. There must be a way out."

He took the precaution to turn off the most of the light, and to proceed with due silence and caution.

Iole was quite pale, and much excited. They traversed another suite of rooms, and, at length, found themselves before a door, which was slightly ajar, and from beyond which came some gleams of light.

As the brother and sister checked their steps, looking at each other, Iole trembled like a leaf.

"It must be Nerle's apartment," she whispered. "Oh, if he should detect our presence!"

Ruy gave her hand a reassuring pressure, and peered through the opening, taking care to conceal his light entirely and make no noise.

He beheld Senor Nerle sitting alone in the apartment, with his back towards the intruders, engaged in smoking a cigar, and evidently absorbed in thought. He regarded him a moment, and then reported to his sister, and they retreated to an adjacent corridor.

"He will kill us if we are discovered," the girl whispered. "I never saw such expressions as his face wore to-day. Let us hurry to find the entrance!"

Immediately following her words there came a loud knock on the outer door of the apartment in which Nerle was seated.

"Perhaps the visitor is worth seeing," whispered Ruy. "What I have learned of Nerle to-day incites me to learn more; all is fair after his violence. Wait here, or come to the door with me. We will listen!"

Iole rallied her forces for the measure, and they stole back to the partly-opened door.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEVERAL SECRETS OF IMPORTANCE.

NERLE had already proceeded to the entrance and was giving admission to the visitor, who proved to be Senor Lasso.

"Ah, good evening, padre," said the owner of the castle, extending his jewelled hand; "I was just thinking of coming to you—take a seat!"

He placed an easy chair for his visitor, and Lasso settled himself into it, returning Nerle's salutations.

It was a noticeable fact that he treated Nerle as a superior, and that Nerle treated him with a slight condescension.

This circumstance, to the listeners, who were used to the pretended priest's assumptions of superiority, looked very strange.

"Well, Lasso," said Nerle, in his easy way, "have you seen the galleon?"

"No. To tell the truth I have been busy writing my sermon for next Sunday. What galleon is she?"

"One that has taken refuge in the bay from the coming storm. She was piloted in by that young Leol. She belongs to Count Regla, of Mexico."

"Count Regla!" exclaimed Lasso, starting excitedly to his feet; "it is not possible."

"Then your information is better than mine," replied Nerle, with a somewhat suspicious glance at the startled visitor. "Pray, permit me to ask what there is singular in the count's presence?"

"Oh; nothing—that is—noting," said Lasso, recovering his self-control. "I—yes, I used to have some knowledge of the family, that's all. And so the count is here in a galleon?"

"Yes! He's aloft at last, and on his way to Spain. The position of the family in Mexico has been full of annoyances since the revolution of Hidalgo, and the count has finally resolved on going to Europe. I have been expecting this movement for several years. He takes his wealth with him."

The pretended priest nodded, appearing to have been plunged into a deep reverie by the announcement of Count Regla's presence, but another suspicious glance from Nerle brought him to his senses, and he said:

"The count's fortune ought to be large."

"Large, Lasso! It is immense. He has allowed the story to get abroad that the family is impoverished, but I know better. The galleon in the bay is probably full of specie—actually loaded with it!"

The eyes of the listener sparkled maliciously, and a number of significant glances were exchanged between the two men, ere Nerle resumed.

"Yes, the count is here, waiting to see the end of

the gathering tempest. He undoubtedly has twelve or fifteen millions in diamonds and specie aboard of the galleon, and I was just thinking of coming for you to help me to get it. We have now been associated in affairs of this kind about ten years, Lasso, and I have found your services reliable and useful—only Lasso," and he gave his visitor another searching glance, "I think you have a few secrets from me; for instance, why do you never invite me to come and see that niece of yours? And why is it that you are so reserved on your past acquaintance with these Reglas?"

Lasso winced a little, and coloured still more noticeably, but he regained his self-control and replied with assumed carelessness:

"Oh, there's no secret in the case. There's nothing in the matter worth mentioning, or I should tell you of it, of course. I have no secrets from you. As to my niece, she is a hideous and ignorant creature, as I have told you, and I have no other motive in keeping her within doors (since the accident which deformed her) than that of sparing my neighbours an unwelcome sight."

Nerle nodded assent to all these assertions, but without making any show of believing them, and Lasso proceeded:

"As regards the seizure of the galleon, I will help you in any way I can, of course. In return I want you to get rid of that young Leol—have him carried to Callocarras!"

"That's already done," replied Nerle. "Knowing that his services as a pilot are too valuable to be left at the call of the Count Regla, I sent word before dark to a party in communication with Callocarras, and the young man was duly seized. I have servants within call who have just reported the seizure to me!"

The impostor was delighted to hear it, and expressed his rejoicings in such a stream of infernal malice that Iole Leol found it difficult to control her apprehensions.

"That young man must never be seen again on Isla Grande," the pretended priest concluded. "You must see to it, Senor Nerle, that he is shot, sunk in the sea, or in some way cleverly removed from my path! Not for millions would I have him regain his liberty—not for millions! not for all the gold and silver in the galleon! I cannot tell you how much I hate him!"

Nerle was astonished at the vehemence of his companion's murderous feelings towards Ruy, and again eyed him suspiciously.

"I have heard you express a milder dislike of him before," he observed. "Why do you hate him? Are you in any way concerned in the secret of his birth? You can't be his father?" and he smiled. "Out with the truth, Lasso; you need not fear to tell me."

Lasso moved uneasily in his seat, but did not seem inclined to answer the questions of his companion, and Nerle continued:

"Has the secret any connection with your niece? You know you have been so very careful that I should not see her—"

"You are mistaken, Senor Nerle," interrupted Lasso, awkwardly. "You can see the girl when you please. As to this young Leol, there's no particular secret about him, to my knowledge, only I don't like him, and I'm bound to make a speedy end of him."

Nerle bowed assentingly, appearing willing to deprecate the other's wrath, and there was a momentary pause.

"He calls Yola hideous," whispered Iole to her brother. "How he lies!"

"He has an object in doing so, you may rest assured," returned Ruy. "Let's hear the rest of their disclosures and confidences."

The next instant they heard Nerle saying:

"Well, Lasso, whatever may be your future, you will have no trouble with Leol! He is now in the hands of Callocarras, and has killed one of his men, so that it will be no more than justice to give him an opportunity of sounding the Caribbean."

The pretended priest exhibited his satisfaction at the assurance, and again became abstracted. Nerle watched him a moment, and then exclaimed:

"Come, come, Lasso, of what are you thinking?"

The visitor started and coloured, and replied:

"Of something that connects me with the past. The story is too long to be told now, but you shall some day hear it. And so Count Regla has come to Isla Grande! Strange—strange!"

Nerle pretended to be musing, and quietly watched Lasso, as he again sank into a reverie. The thoughts of the latter were evidently of a mixed nature, as if the discovery of Yola's relations to our hero had not been the only disturbing event of the day, but he finally aroused himself again, and said:

"Well, well, well! soon set all to rights, Senor Nerle. Let's hear how you propose to seize the galleon, and just what you want me to do!"

"Very well, Lasso. I will soon tell you the whole plan. First, let me call my coloured boy, and we will have some wine and refreshments. Tolon! Tolon!"

He raised his voice, calling several times, and Ruy saw that he was looking towards the door of the room in which he and Iole were concealed.

"You hear, Iole?" whispered our hero to his sister. "He's looking this way. It's time for us to be moving. Let's go."

There was no answer save a suppressed cry of horror, and the girl's form sank forward heavily into Ruy's arms. He saw that she had fainted, and looking beyond her, he perceived the nature of the sudden shock which had rendered her unconscious—perceived the outlines of a dusky figure, whom he knew to be Nerle's tool, with drawn dagger and gleaming eyes, crouched in an attitude of deadly menace near him.

And even as Ruy saw that his presence was detected, the menial set up a loud cry of alarm!

CHAPTER IX.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

RUY had not listened so long to the conversation of the two villains without realising his peril. At the first cry of alarm, therefore, he relinquished his lantern, laid Iole on the floor, seized a heavy footstool at hand, and dealt the brawling menial a blow, that left him senseless at his feet.

"Heavens! What's that?" asked the pretended priest.

"Something wrong," replied Nerle. "Let's see."

As Ruy heard these words, he saw that the servant was powerless, caught up his lantern and Iole, and commenced a retreat in the direction from which he had come, hoping to make his way to the particular corridor and door by which he and the pirate queen had gained admission.

The conspirators bounded forward, throwing open the door, and the cries that escaped them, as they beheld the prostrate servant and the retreating figure, resembled the roar of wild beasts.

They felt that their confidences had been overheard, and their excitement was proportioned to the interests they had at stake.

"Halt, there!" shouted Nerle, bounding after Ruy, pistol in hand. "Stop, senor, or I will fire!"

Ruy only quickened his steps, looking for the desired outlet, and passed into a wide corridor, which opened on a central court of the castle. Nerle fired both his pistols at him, and the shots passed near enough to Ruy to excite his liveliest anxieties for Iole. Finding his flight out off in that direction, he turned at bay, flashing his light upon the pursuers. The astonishment of Nerle at recognizing him was beyond description.

"It's that infernal pilot!" he shouted. "Stranger still, his sister is with him! How did this happen? How did he escape and gain admittance?"

Lasso uttered a cry like that of a tiger or wolf ravening for blood, and responded:

"No matter how! We must seize him!"

Ruy understood his peril, although not able to fully comprehend Lasso's ferocity, not knowing what a jealousy was beneath it. He had noticed, while passing along the halls and corridors, that arms of various kinds were hanging against the walls, in various nooks and corners, and he lost no time in seizing one of the longest and heaviest swords presented to his gaze. Iole lay like a dead weight in his arms, so that he could have fled only at a slow rate of speed, even had the way been clear, and as he was not the man to desert the poor girl, or surrender his liberty without a struggle, he laid her on a divan in the corridor, placed his lantern on the floor, and confronted the two conspirators, saying:

"Not a step further this way, senores!"

The pursuers paused, the indomitable bearing of Ruy having impressed them with a proper perception of the difficulties in their way. They marked the light of an heroic soul in his eyes, and took timely warnings from his looks of scorn and defiance.

"We must seize him!" repeated Lasso. "We must arm!"

They took swords from the wall, and moved toward the young hero, Nerle saying:

"What do you mean, Senor Leol, by entering my residence in this manner?"

"Allow me to ask," rejoined Ruy, "what you mean by imprisoning Iole?"

"Let's have no words with him," said Lasso, nervously. "There are two of us."

In effect, an instant fight was the only event that could have followed such a complication of affairs.

Nerle smiled, in his grim and silent sort of way, and rushed upon Ruy; and it was strange, considering the peaceful and gentle character Nerle had so long borne, how well he fought, what power there was in his slender arm, and what skill he possessed as a swordsman.

The assault was met with an ability for which he had not given the young pilot credit; Ruy preserving his calmness, maintaining his guard, meeting the thrusts of his opponent, and detecting his feints. In fact, Nerle speedily discovered that no common antagonist was before him, Ruy making up in strength, agility, and the justice of his cause, what he lacked in science.

Now advancing in rapid attack, now retreating in wary defence, he speedily filled the souls of his enemies with surprise and anxiety.

"Quick, to the attack!" called Nerle.

"I cannot!" answered Lasso, who was dancing about behind his partner in iniquity.

"The corridor is too narrow! I cannot pass!"

"Go the other way, then! You must get behind him! Go through the parlours and up the court-stairs. Hurry!"

The voice of Nerle showed that he was terribly anxious for the result, and Lasso's haste to follow the directions given him, showed that he was equally excited. The young pilot saw that his only chance of a successful issue was to dispose of Nerle before Lasso could attack him in the rear, and he redoubled his efforts, raining a torrent of blows upon his enemy which required immense exertions to parry.

"Quick!" repeated Nerle, in a wild excitement that partook of fear and astonishment.

"Come on, Pedro!"

An answering cry came from Lasso, as he darted up the court-stairs, and plunged at our hero from behind, with eyes and features glowing with murderous fury.

"Down with him!" he cried. "We may as well kill him."

Ruy perceived that he was hemmed in, and realized his awful situation, thus beset, thus ignorant of the whereabouts of the desired outlet, and thus burdened with his unconscious sinner.

What could he do?

He turned upon Lasso, repulsing his attack and driving him backwards; but at this instant the servant before mentioned appeared on the scene, rubbing his damaged head with one hand, and flourishing his sword with the other.

"We have him now!" shouted Nerle. "At him, all together!"

They had him indeed; but the victory was not instantly gained, nor bloodless. Ruy had time to disarm Lasso, and gave him a severe thrust in the right arm, besides severely wounding the menial; but while he was doing this Nerle rushed in and seized him; his movements were hampered; the wounded man came to the rescue, and the next instant he was bound and helpless.

"The hardest fight we have had lately, I think," said Nerle, his former quiet manner returning. "Come into my bedroom, and we'll smooth our ruffled feathers."

His companions followed him, leaving Iolet still unconscious, and our hero lying on the floor of the corridor. They soon dressed their wounds and scratches, washing themselves, and Nerle even changed his clothes, they having been half torn from him. After making his toilet, with perfume, etc., he dressed the wound of his servant, comforted him with a handful of gold, and sent him away to his quarters, telling him that he could have a month's leisure.

"We ought to have killed him," growled Lasso. "You could have done so when he turned on me, and I don't see why you didn't."

"Oh, we can do that at any time," responded Nerle. "There's no use of staining the floor. I brought that mosaic work from Italy, and couldn't really think of spoiling it! Come! let's return to him!"

As the two men returned to the corridor, they saw that Iolet was recovering her senses. Nerle sprinkled her face with water, and she soon started up, looked from one to the other, and glanced wildly around, her glances finally falling upon her foster-brother.

"It's all right, sister," said Ruy, quietly. "We are helpless and prisoners, but you must not despair. Be courageous! Be hopeful! These villains will not prosper for ever!"

The words had the desired effect upon Iolet, and she bounded to her brother's side, raising his head in her hands.

"I can bear all the rest," she said, "if you are not injured!"

They conversed a moment, realizing their situation and the nature of their enemies, and Nerle then advanced and said:

"Pardon me, Don Ruy, for interrupting you, but I have certain matters to talk over with my friend, and I shall have to bring this interview to a close. You comprehend, of course, that you and the fair Iolet will have to accept of my hospitality until further notice."

Our hero understood his helpless situation, and made no reply. He merely whispered to his sister:

"Courage, Iolet. She may come to our rescue, in one way or another!"

Iolet knew that Ruy referred to the pirate queen, and a hope of relief very naturally followed.

"I will now conduct the young lady to her room," said Nerle. "Come, Iolet!"

She kissed and embraced Ruy, with more firmness than he had expected, and assured him that she would not despair. Nerle then conducted her along the corridor to a room equalling in elegance the one she had before occupied, but having still more the look of a gilded prison, the single window being small and near the ceiling, covered with a gauze-work of heavy wires, and looking out upon the inner court.

"One word, Senor Nerle," said the girl, turning upon her enemy, as he ushered her into this place.

"What do you intend to do with my brother?"

"That depends," was the reply—"depends in some measure upon yourself. I may say, for your peace of mind, that I shall not harm him until I have talked with you further on the subject of our proposed marriage. I will even add that there is some sort of a mystery between him and Lasso which I intend to solve before doing him an injury. You are aware that his birth is a secret, and that he may turn out to be somebody, and that I may find it to my interest to preserve him. To be candid, I am satisfied that the padre is not dealing frankly with me, and I mean to know the reason of his hatred to your brother."

Iolet surveyed the splendid apartment, and Nerle placed his light on a table, saying:

"I will leave this light with you, in the hope that it may cheer your solitude. I regret, senorita, that I cannot return you to the handsome apartment you had to-day, but it's your own fault. I give you full permission to scream as much as you choose, only let me suggest that the walls are several feet thick, and you will only deafen yourself. No one else can hear you. Hoping to see you in a sensible mood in the morning, I bid you good-night."

He withdrew, leaving the girl to her dreary solitude and agonising fears, and returned to the apartment where Lasso stood guard over the helpless prisoner.

"Your sister has retired, senor," said Nerle, addressing our hero. "Allow me to show you to your room."

Lasso assisted him in conducting our hero to a dungeon down among the foundations of the castle—a strong and gloomy prison, strangely at variance with the gorgeous apartments above it.

An iron chain, one end of which was attached to a staple in the wall, was passed around the young man's waist, and securely fastened.

"Pleasant dreams to you, senor," said Nerle, with a mocking smile. "You have taken a fair share of exercise to-night, and will doubtless sleep well."

Locking the dungeon-door behind him, Nerle followed Lasso up-stairs to the library, where their confidences had been interrupted, and the two men seated themselves, and rejoiced together. The delight of the padre was fiendish.

"He must never leave these walls alive," he said, with an oath. "He must starve to death in that dungeon, or die by some speedier means."

Nerle looked curiously at his confederate, and replied:

"Leave it to me, Lasso. Of course, I cannot permit him to go free again. We'll consider his fate in the morning, and do whatever is best."

Lasso thanked him warmly, and even extravagantly, and muttered:

"He will be swept from my path. It is time."

Not a motion nor a word of the impostor escaped Nerle, although he did not appear to hear or see him, and he now said, with a pretended yawn:

"I am rather tired since our little adventure. Stay with me to-night, Lasso, and we'll talk of Leol's future in the morning, as well as the galleon. Come, let me give you a bed. It's as dark as Erebus, and hark! the tempest is upon us."

The padre listened.

The wind had been rising during the last few minutes, and it now broke over the scene with the wildest fury. The roar of the gale, the dashing and chopping of the waves against the rocks at the base of the castle and along the beach—and the intense darkness which had swept like a funeral pall over Isla Grande, all made up a scene of fury and blackness worthy of the scenes the two villains had committed.

"How the wind moans and shrieks," said Lasso, giving an appreciating eye to the luxurious and delicately perfumed apartment. "The night is indeed wild. I hardly know whether to go or stay."

"You had better stay," responded Nerle, and he proceeded to make all secure for the night.

"I'm not much pleased at sparing Ruy," said Lasso, after a thoughtful pause. "You have plenty of other servants at command. Why didn't they come to our assistance?"

"My servants know better than to interfere with

my affairs," replied Nerle. "They come only when I call them."

The pretended priest thought to himself of Yola imprisoned in her lonely cell at the monastery on that wild and fearful night, and concluded it would be a good idea to leave her there in solitude, as her fears might induce her to consent to his wishes, when he should visit her in the morning.

"Well, I can stay," he said to Nerle. "I have left orders with my old housekeeper, so that I shall not be needed at home to-night."

Nerle expressed his pleasure, and the two men sat a little while engaged in conversation, and the host then led the way up stairs to a handsome room, of which Lasso took possession for the night.

"Pleasant dreams," said Nerle, as he left him. "I am now going to discover how that Leol released his sister, and shall then retire."

Lasso locked himself in his apartment, and Nerle went along the hall, muttering, as he jingled a bunch of keys in his pocket:

"Strange! strange! How could he have got into my house, or my rooms? I keep them locked all the while. Here is a mystery for me to solve."

He proceeded toward the room where he had imprisoned Iolet, gaily humming an air. He tried the latch. The door was unlocked, and he passed in.

CHAPTER X.

NERLE'S VISIT TO THE MONASTERY.

THE storm raged furiously from the south-east a couple of hours, and then there was a momentary lull, followed by a blow from the north-west which baffled description. This return gale continued several hours, and then commenced dying out. The sea had been too greatly disturbed to immediately feel the diminution of the tempest, but the sky gradually cleared during the dawn of the day.

The morning light was just breaking over the castle of Senor Nerle, when he descended the stairs to the room in which he had received Lasso the preceding evening. He appeared to have rested exceedingly well, for he was smiling, and looked as fresh and light-hearted as a schoolboy. Perhaps his face was a little paler than usual, owing to his contest with Ruy, but his manner clearly evinced that he was jubilant and content.

"Hallo, Pedro!" he exclaimed; "are you up?"

He had paced the floor a few times, with a thoughtful air, when he was joined by Lasso.

"How cheerful you look!" said the padre, enviously.

"Have you decided what to do with Ruy?"

"Well, not exactly," was the reply. "We'll settle the question in the course of an hour or two—say after breakfast."

The padre assented, and then uttered an exclamation, pointing to the wristband of Nerle's shirt. He had discovered a fresh stain of blood upon it.

"I didn't see that last night after our fight with Ruy," he declared. "You must have been wounded after all."

There was a strange look in Nerle's eyes as he replied:

"You are right; I discovered, on retiring, a slight wound on my arm, and it bled a little: it's all right now," and he turned up the wristband. "I am now going to look into the creek, and see if my sloop's all right after the storm. I'll be back in half-an-hour, and we'll have breakfast. You will oblige me by taking the keys and looking after our prisoners."

He handed the keys to Lasso as he spoke, and the padre said, with a sparkle in his eyes:

"I should like very much to visit young Leol. After I've called on him and his sister, I'll amuse myself here in the library. I hope you will find that the tempest has not touched your sloop."

Nerle thanked his guest courteously, and donned his broad-brimmed Panama hat, passing out into his private garden, and letting himself out upon the cliffs, locking the wall-door behind him.

The day had broken cloudily, and there was some wind and an immense swell on the sea. The white-capped waves dashed against the cliffs in impotent fury, and sea-gulls flew screaming over the scene.

The air, however, was laden with fragrance, thousands of odorous blossoms having been crushed in the storm, and now yielding their dying breaths, and thousands more hurried into blossoming.

Nerle glided through paths among bushes, and over barren rocks, coming out at last upon a deep creek, in a secluded part of which lay a small and beautiful sloop. A hasty survey assured him that the storm had done her no injury, the trees and higher shores having protected her from its fury.

"She's all safe," he muttered; "as safe as if she had been in the court of the castle."

He turned away and hurried in the direction of the monastery occupied by Lasso.

"I'll see that girl!" he thought. "I've long had some curiosity about her, for Pedro has never mentioned her name if he could help it, and has always assured me that she is deformed. I'll see for myself. I know Lasso isn't giving me his full confidence!"

He reached the gloomy pile and slipped into the back door, which happened to be ajar, and soon discovered the kitchen, a large room which had been used by the monks for the same purpose. He saw the old housekeeper, with half-shut eyes, showing that she was almost blind, bending over a breakfast, which she was busily engaged in cooking, but a closer scrutiny of the room assured him that the girl was not there.

He looked through the rooms that were open, pausing in the chapel to notice the decorations, which showed a woman's refined taste, and then returned to the kitchen, thinking:

"Perhaps he's locked the girl up. I'll look!"

A careful survey showed him a bunch of keys hanging on the kitchen wall, and he managed to secure them, the old housekeeper being deaf as well as half blind, and busy with her cooking.

He then renewed his search through the gloomy cells, passing along dusty corridors and trying every lock, finally coming to the cell where the girl was imprisoned.

By the light that came through a window near the ceiling at the end of the passage, he saw that the door was unusually strong, and the lock double.

Putting his ear to the keyhole, he listened, but all was silent within.

He then looked through the keyhole, but his eye encountered only a terrible gloom.

"I may as well look," he thought, "but the girl may be out of doors, after all my trouble. However, it may be well to know some of the nooks and corners in this edifice!"

He inserted the key and turned the bolt, opening the door.

Before his eye became accustomed to the darkness, the girl came to the entrance, and he drew her into the hall; his astonishment was beyond description at beholding her fairy-like beauty, the effect of which was not at all dimmed by her evident grief.

He regarded Yola's tiny form, so delicately rounded, yet so *petite*; her exquisitely beautiful face, so innocent and pure in its expression; her large, wondering eyes and bewitching *tout ensemble*—and remained speechless with amazement. Never in his life had he seen a woman like her! He hesitated whether to address her as a child or a woman.

"Who are you?" asked Yola, breaking the silence, and looking up to his face inquiringly. "How did you come here?"

"I am Senor Nerle," was the reply, spoken in a tone softer and gentler than even Nerle had ever used before. "I own the castle, you know."

The girl shrank from him with a frightened expression.

"Senor Nerle!" she repeated. "Oh! go away! Please go away!"

Nerle was astonished at her evident fear of him, and his voice was like music as he held her hand in a gentle but firm grasp, saying:

"Why are you afraid of me, little one?"

Yola hesitated, looking up with her clear truthful eyes, as if she would read his heart, and answered:

"Padre Lasso says you are a bad man, senor, and if I were to offend you, you would as soon kill me as not. He says you are a wicked monster, and that I must keep out of your sight."

The hold with which Nerle held her tiny hand was as light as before, but a vivid gleam shot up into his eyes, and an evil smile fluttered a second about his lips. He controlled his angry emotions, however, and said:

"Padre Lasso lied to you. He knows better. You mustn't believe all he says."

"Oh, I don't," replied Yola, with a charming *sautee*.

"You don't look so bad as he says."

Although the young girl felt an instinctive shrinking from her new acquaintance—her pure and guileless soul, unconsciously to herself, recognizing the blackness of his soul—she knew nothing of the world, and thought his smiles and gentleness the index to a kind disposition. As Yola made her last remark, Nerle smiled and said:

"I'm glad you think so, little fairy. Now, tell me what Lasso shut you up for?"

Yola was silent a moment, and then said:

"He says I am not his niece—not a Lasso at all."

"I can see that for myself," interrupted Nerle.

"You look no more like him than a humming-bird looks like an owl."

Yola smiled and protested:

"He says he's a Protestant and wants me to be his wife, and because I said I would not, he shut me up in this cell. He never was cross to me before. I was in the dark here in all the awful storm last night."

"He's a brute!" exclaimed Nerle. "But don't you see why he traduced me? He wanted you himself."

Yola blushed and assented:

"But why didn't you want him?" continued Nerle, looking with an ardent admiration on her angel-face.

"Why didn't you promise to marry him?"

"Oh, I don't like him. He seems to me to be wicked, and I wouldn't marry a man who would put me in such a dungeon as this," and she pointed back to her cell.

"Besides," she added, gravely, "he ought not to marry, you know, having made a vow that he wouldn't."

Nerle smiled, unable to express the emotions which came over him at that moment—his anger at Lasso for deceiving him about the girl, his surprise at her beauty and intelligence, and his admiration of her.

"It's a wonder to me," he finally said, "how such a delicate and innocent little thing ever grew in the air tainted by Lasso's presence! Did you give me all your reasons for refusing the padre, little bird?"

Yola's usually clear, pale cheeks were flushed with crimson, and she answered sweetly:

"No, not all. I'd just as soon tell you, for everybody's going to know it—I'm promised to Ruy Loel!"

Her bright face, luminous with her great love for her betrothed, and with womanly tenderness at the thought of him, completed the revelation to the villain.

He had been thinking what a fool he was to carry off Yolet Loel, when he might have had such an aristocratic and dainty little beauty as this nameless Yola—when she made her confession of love for the young hammock-maker, and set his heart on fire with evil passions. His eyes glowed with a fiendish hate for his rival, and he comprehended the fierce jealousy of Lasso.

Nerle was a man of the tropics—quick to love and quick to hate. Never in all his life had his heart been touched, however, with a strong love for any woman until now; and now he loved with an intensity of which he had not deemed himself capable—with a swift and steady passion that swept all barriers before it. He had fancied other women—as he had fancied Yolet Loel—but this was his first real love, the first time his whole being had bowed down to a woman.

It was a strange fact that the guilty heart that queenly beauties had tried in vain to win, had been laid so quickly before the childish beauty and innocence of Yola.

When he again turned to her his face was calm, but his eyes showed a new and strong resolve.

"I must go home," he said. "Padre Lasso came up to call on me last night and stayed on account of the storm, so you see I must hurry back, for he's there now. You must not tell him that I have been here when he comes back, or he'll rage dreadfully. Will you promise not to tell him?"

Yola promised.

"I shall have to lock you up as I found you," he continued, "but you must be hopeful and cheerful. I will get you out of this cell, let what will come, but I want to try fair means first."

"I won't tell him," said Yola. "I will be very secret about it. I am sorry to make you so much trouble, senor. If you would tell Ruy how I'm shut up here he'll come and take me away. Would you mind the trouble of going to him?"

Again the evil light shot into Nerle's eyes, and he was obliged to wait a moment before he could reply.

"I don't believe that Ruy is at home," he at length said. "I think he's gone off on business for the galleon. You'd better trust me, little fairy. I'll be sure to get you away from here to-day. Remember that I am your friend."

Yola thanked him, shook hands with him, and then returned to her cell, and Nerle locked her in—replaced the keys in the kitchen without being detected, and hastened back to the castle.

He found Lasso seated in the library.

"How are the prisoners?" he asked, "all right?"

"Yes. How did you find the sloop?"

"Safe; but the boys aboard of her have had a regular siege. Let's have breakfast."

They proceeded to a large dining-hall, where a luxurious breakfast was waiting.

(To be continued.)

In the European Army in India there are many men chronic drunkards, and who, on this account, pass their lives as patients in the hospitals, or as prisoners in the guard-room. They do no duty, and are sources of great expense to Government, of considerable trouble to their officers, and moral pests amongst their comrades. The discipline and efficiency of regiments would be materially increased if such men were weeded out of them, and it has been suggested that the Government should establish a sanitarium in India for the

reception and cure of such characters. This might be located in the hills, and, for financial as well as sanitary reasons, take the shape of a tea-plantation. Here daily toil in the open air would be one of the main conditions of the inmates' lives, and regarded as a powerful means of cure; for active out-door occupation, regularly followed, brings in its train blessings and rewards which cannot otherwise, or with such certainty, be come by. These are, muscular strength, good digestion, a pleasant weariness of body, sound sleep, and a certain placidity of mind, which, in its reaction on the body, is eminently friendly to physical health.

SELF-MADE;

OR,

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

By Mrs. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "The Lost Heiress," &c. &c.

CHAPTER CXX.

I am not the thing I was;
For heaven doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turned away my former self.

Shakespeare.

It is something for a solitary and homeless man like Herman Brudnell to discover suddenly that he has for years been the sole object of a good and beautiful woman's love; and to know that a home as happy and a wife as lovely as his youthful imagination ever pictured, were waiting to receive him.

Early the next morning Ishmael arose refreshed from a good night's rest; but Mr. Brudnell got up, weary, from a sleepless pillow.

It was to be a busy day with Ishmael; so, after a hasty breakfast, he took a temporary leave of Mr. Brudnell and set out.

His first visit was to the chambers of the Messrs. Hudson, solicitors.

Where all parties are agreed, business must be promptly despatched, despite of even the law's proverbial delays.

The Earl of Hurst-Monceaux and Judge Merlin were quite agreed in this affair of restitution, and therefore their attorneys could have little trouble.

As the reader knows, upon the marriage of the Viscount Vincent and Claudia Merlin, there had been no settlements; therefore the whole of the bride's fortune became the absolute property of the bridegroom.

Subsequently, Lord Vincent had died intestate; therefore Claudia as his widow would have been legally entitled to but a portion of that very fortune she herself had brought to him in marriage, all the rest falling to the viscount's family, or rather to its representative, the Earl of Hurst-Monceaux.

It was this legal injustice that the earl wished to rectify, by making over to Lady Vincent all his right, title, and interest in the estate left by the deceased Lord Vincent.

This business he had entrusted to his solicitors, giving them full power to act in his name.

And Ishmael, with the concurrence of Judge Merlin, made it his business to see that every binding, legal form was observed in the transfer, so that Lady Vincent should rest undisturbed in her possessions by any grasping heir that might succeed the Earl of Hurst-Monceaux.

When his business arrangements were completed, Ishmael re-entered the cab and drove back.

He found that Mr. Brudnell had walked out. That did not surprise Ishmael. Mr. Brudnell generally did walk out. Like all homeless, solitary, and unoccupied men, Mr. Brudnell had formed rambling habits; and had he been a degree or so lower in the social scale, he must have been classed among the vagrants.

Ishmael sat down to write to Judge Merlin. He told the judge of the satisfactory completion of his business with the solicitors of the Earl of Hurst-Monceaux; and that he had the documents affecting the restitution of Lady Vincent's property in his own safe-keeping; that he did not like to trust them to the post, but would bring them in person when he should return, which would be as soon as a little affair that he had in hand could be arranged; and he hinted that Mr. Brudnell would probably accompany him. Finally, he ended with sending affectionate respects to Lady Vincent and the Countess of Hurst-Monceaux.

Being anxious to save the post at the last moment, Ishmael did not intrust the delivery of this letter to the waiters of the hotel, but took his hat and hurried out to post it himself, paying the extra rate exacted for late letters, and then walked back to the hotel.

Mr. Brudnell had returned, and at the moment of Ishmael's entrance he was in consultation with the waiter about the dinner.

Before dinner, however, Ishmael was told that there

was a visitor waiting to see him. He found it was the German Jew.

"Why, Isaacs! is this you, already? I am very glad to see you! Who has sent you?" said Ishmael, advancing and shaking hands with his visitor.

"No one; I come myself. I saw your name in the list of arrivals at dish house, published in the morning's papers. And I said—dish ish to name of von true shentlemans; and I'll call to see him; and here I am," replied the Jew, cordially returning Ishmael's shake of the hand.

"Thank you, Isaacs, for your good opinion of me. Sit down. I have been very anxious to see you, to speak to you on a subject that I must broach at once, lest we should be interrupted before we have discussed it," said Ishmael, who was desirous of bringing Isaacs to confession before the entrance of Mr. Brudnell.

"Speak ten," said the Jew, settling himself in his chair.

"Isaacs, you had a beautiful kinswoman of whom you used to speak to me on our voyage; but you never told me her name," said Ishmael, gravely, seating himself near the Jew.

"Tint! I, verily? Well, her name was Berenice, daughter of Zillah; Zillah was mine mother's sister, and was very fair to look upon. She married with a rich Lontion Shew, and tied leaving von fair daughter, Berenice, mine kinswoman, who married with an English lort; very old, very poor, but very much in love with my kinswoman. He married her because she was fair to look upon and very rich; her father made her marry him because he was a lort; he zoon tied and left her a widow, and she never married again; she left to country, and was away many years, and I have not seen her since. My fair kinswoman! She had a great wrong done her!" said the Jew, dropping his chin upon his chest and falling into sad and penitential reverie.

"Yes, Isaacs," said Ishmael, rising and laying his hand solemnly on the breast of the Jew, "a wrong so great in its devastating effects upon her life, that you cannot even estimate its enormity. But, Isaacs, you can do something to right this wrong!"

"I! Fader Abraham! what can I?" exclaimed the Jew, impressed and frightened by the earnestness of Ishmael's words and manner.

"You can make a full disclosure of the circumstances under which the miscreant Dromie Dugald obtained access to Lady Hurst-Monceaux's private apartments."

The Jew gazed up in the young man's face, as though he was unable to withdraw his eyes; he seemed to be held spellbound by the powerful magnetism of Ishmael's spirit.

"Isaacs," continued the young man, "whatever may be the nature of these disclosures, I promise you that you shall be held free of consequences—I promise you; and you know the value of my promise."

The Jew did not answer, and did not remove his eyes from the earnest, eloquent face of Ishmael.

"So you see, Isaacs, that your disclosures, while they will deliver the countess from the suspicions under which her happiness has drooped for so many years, can do you no injury. And now, Isaacs, I ask you, as man speaking to man, a question that I adjure you to answer, as you shall answer at that great day of account, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed—Did you admit Dromie Dugald to the private apartments of the Countess of Hurst-Monceaux, without the knowledge or consent of her ladyship?"

"Cot forgive me, I tit!" exclaimed the Jew, in a low, terrified voice.

"That will do, Isaacs," said Ishmael, ringing the bell. A waiter came.

"Is there an unoccupied sitting-room that I can have the use of for a short time?" inquired Ishmael.

"Yes, sir."

"Show me to it immediately, then."

The waiter led the way, and Ishmael, beckoning the Israelite to accompany him, followed to a comfortable little room, warmed by a bright fire, such as they kept always ready for chance guests.

"Writing materials, James," said Ishmael.

The man went for them; and while he was gone, Ishmael said:

"We might have been interrupted in the other room, Isaacs; that is the reason why I have brought you here."

When the waiter had returned with the writing materials, and arranged them on the table, and again had withdrawn, Ishmael drew a chair to the table, seated himself, took a pen, and said:

"Now, Isaacs, sit down near me, and relate, as faithfully as you can, all the circumstances attending the concealment of Dromie Dugald in Lady Hurst-Monceaux's apartments."

The Jew, as if acting under a spell, did as he was ordered. He drew a chair to the table, seated himself opposite Ishmael, and—to use a common phrase—"made a clean breast of it."

I will not attempt to give his confession in detail. I will only give the epitome of it. He acknowledged that he had been bribed by Captain Dugald to favour the captain's addresses to the beautiful young widow. But he solemnly declared that he had supposed himself to be acting as much for the lady's good as for his own interest, when he took the captain's money and admitted him freely to the house of his kinswoman, where he himself was staying as a temporary guest, and where he received her suitor as his own visitor.

Farther, he more solemnly declared that on that fatal evening when he secretly admitted the captain to the house, and guided him to the boudoir of the countess, he had not the remotest suspicion of the nefarious purpose of the suitor. He thought Dugald merely wished for an opportunity of pressing his suit. He had no idea that the unscrupulous villain designed to conceal himself in the closet of the dressing-room, and so pass the night in Lady Hurst-Monceaux's private apartments, and show himself in the morning *en deshabille* at her open window, for the benefit of all the passengers through the street.

He affirmed that when in the morning he heard of this infamous abuse of confidence on the part of his patron, he had not had courage to meet his kinswoman at breakfast, but had decamped from the house in great haste, and had never seen the countess since that eventful day.

He said that he had heard how much she had suffered from the affair, at least for a short time; and that afterwards he had heard she had left the country; that he had since supposed the whole circumstance had been forgotten, and he did not even now understand how his disclosures should serve her, since no one now remembered the escapade of Captain Dugald.

As Isaacs spoke, Ishmael took down the statement in writing.

When it was finished, he turned to the Jew, and said:

"You are mistaken in one thing—nay, indeed, in two things, Isaacs. The first is, in the supposition that your disclosures cannot now serve the countess, since the world has long ago done her full justice. It is true that the world has done her full justice, for there is no lady living more highly esteemed than is the Countess of Hurst-Monceaux. So, if the world were only in question, Isaacs, I need never have troubled you to speak. But there is an individual in question—and this brings me to your second mistake—namely, in the supposition that the countess never married again. She did marry again; but a few months subsequent to her marriage, her husband heard the story of Captain Dugald's adventure, as it was then circulated and believed; and he thought himself the dupe of a cunning adventurer, and estranged himself from his wife from that day until this."

"Fader Abraham!" exclaimed the Jew, raising both his hands in consternation.

"Providence has lately put me in possession of all the facts of this case, and has enabled me to pave the way for a reconciliation between the long-severed pair, supposing that you will have the moral courage to do your kinswoman justice."

"Fader Abraham, I will do her shustice! I will do her more as shustice! I will tell to whole truth! I will tell more as to whole truth, and shwear to it! I will do anything! I would do anything at all to time, if I had knowt it!" said the Jew, earnestly.

"Thank you, Isaacs, I only want the simple truth; more than that would do us harm instead of good. This is the simple truth, I hope, that I have taken down from your lips?"

"Yesh, tat ish to zimple truth!"

"I will read the whole statement to you, Isaacs, and then you will be able to see whether I have taken down your words correctly," said Ishmael.

And he took up the manuscript and read it carefully through, pausing frequently to give the Jew an opportunity of correcting him, if necessary.

"Dat ish all right," said Isaacs, when the reading was finished.

"Now sign it, Isaacs."

The Jew affixed his signature.

"Now, Isaacs, that is all I want of you for the present; but should you be required to make oath to the truth of this, I suppose that you will be found ready to do so."

"Fader Abraham! yes, I will do anything at all, or anything else, to serve mine kinswoman," said the Jew, rising.

"Thank you, Isaacs. Now tell me where I shall find you, in case you should be wanted."

"I am lodging with mine friend, Samuel Phineas, in to Borough."

"I will remember. Thank you, Isaacs. You have done your kinswoman and her friends good service. She will be grateful to you. I have no doubt she will send for you! Would you like to come to her?"

"Mit all my feet! Vere ish zhe?"

"At her country seat, Cameron Court, near Edinburgh."

"I don't know it."

"No, you don't know it. It is a comparatively recent purchase of her ladyship, I believe," said Ishmael, rising to accompany the Jew from the room.

When the Hebrew had departed, Ishmael turned into the sitting-room occupied in common by himself and Mr. Brudnell.

He found the table laid for dinner, and Mr. Brudnell walking impatiently up and down.

"Ah, you are there—I was afraid the fish and soup would be spoiled, waiting for you; but here you are in the nick of time," he said, as he touched the bell. "Dinner immediately," he continued, addressing himself to the waiter who answered his summons.

But it was not until dinner was over and the cloth removed, and Mr. Brudnell had finished his bottle of claret and smoked out his pipe, that Ishmael told him of his interview with Isaacs, and laid the written statement of the Jew before him.

Mr. Brudnell read it carefully through, with the deepest interest. When he had finished it, he slowly folded it up and placed it in his breast-pocket, dropped his head upon his chest and remained in deep thought and perfect silence.

After the lapse of a few moments, Ishmael spoke:

"If you think it needful, Isaacs is ready to go before a magistrate and make oath to the truth of that statement."

"It is not needful, Ishmael; I have not the least doubt of its perfect truth. It is not of that I am thinking; but—of my wife! How will she receive me? One thing is certain, that having deeply injured her, I must go to her and acknowledge the wrong and ask her forgiveness. But, oh, Ishmael! what atonement will that be for years of cruel injustice and abandonment! None! none! No! I feel that I can make her no atonement," said Mr. Brudnell, bitterly.

"No, you can make her no atonement, but you can make her happy! And that is all she will need!" said Ishmael, gravely.

"If I thought I could, Ishmael, I would hasten to her at once! In any case I must go to her, acknowledge the wrong I have done her and ask for pardon. But, ah! how will she receive me?"

"Only go and see for yourself, I implore you!" said Ishmael, earnestly.

"When do you return to Edinburgh, Ishmael?"

"When you are ready to accompany me; I am waiting only for you," answered Ishmael, smiling.

"Then we will go by the early train to-morrow morning," said Mr. Brudnell.

"Very well; I shall be ready," replied Ishmael.

Mr. Brudnell rang for coffee. And when it was set on the table he ordered the waiter to call him at five o'clock the next morning, to have his bill ready, and get a fly to the door to take them to the Great Northern station in time for the first train for Edinburgh.

The two gentlemen remained conversing some little time longer, and then retired to their bed-chamber, where, being without the help and hindrance of a valet, they packed their own portmanteaus. And then they went to bed early in order to secure a long and good night's rest, preparatory to their proposed journey of the next morning.

CHAPTER CXXI.

THE MEETING OF THE SEVERED PAIR.

For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;
And true she is as she hath proved herself;
And therefore like herself, wise, fair, and true,
She shall be placed within my constant soul.

Shakespeare.

ISHMAEL and Mr. Brudnell arose before the waiter called them. They dressed quickly, rang and ordered breakfast, and had time to eat it leisurely before the hour at which the cab was ordered to take them to the railway station. They found the train on the point of starting, and had just time enough to settle themselves comfortably in a first-class carriage.

They reached Edinburgh at four in the afternoon.

Ishmael called a cab for himself and fellow-traveller. And when they had taken their seats in it, he gave the order:

"To McGruder's Hotel."

"I think," said the younger man to the elder, "as we are in such good time, we had better go to my rooms at McGruder's and renovate our toilets before driving out to Cameron Court and presenting ourselves to Lady Hurst-Monceaux."

"Yes, yes, certainly, Ishmael; for really I think after that dusty, smoky, cindery day's journey we should be all the better for soap-and-water and clean linen. I don't know how I look, my dear fellow, but, not to flatter you, you present the appearance of a

very interesting master chimney-sweep!" replied Mr. Brudnell.

Ishmael laughed.

Ah, yes, Herman Brudnell jested on the same principle that people are said to jest on their way to execution! Now, when he was so near Cameron Court, and the Countess of Hurst-Monceaux, how ill at ease he had become! how he dreaded yet desired the interview that was to decide his fate!

The distance between the railway station and McGruder's Hotel was so short that it was passed over in a few minutes.

Ishmael paid and dismissed the cab, and the two gentlemen went in.

Ishmael's rooms in that house had never been given up—they had been kept for the use of his party on their journeyings through the city.

He conducted Mr. Brudnell to these rooms, and then ordered luncheon as soon as it could be served, and a fly in half-an-hour.

Twenty minutes they gave to that "renovation" of the toilet advised by Ishmael, ten minutes to a simple luncheon, and then they entered the fly.

Ishmael gave the order:

"To Cameron Court."

As they moved on, Mr. Brudnell said:

"There are several points upon which I would like to consult you before presenting myself to the countess."

"Yes," said Ishmael, looking up with a smile full of earnest, encouraging sympathy.

"But, like all procrastinating natures, I have deferred the task until the last moment."

"There has been no better opportunity than the present."

"That is true. Well, Ishmael, the first doubt that has troubled me is this:—That I should not perhaps intrude upon the countess without writing and apprising her of my intended visit. My appearance will be unexpected, startling—even embarrassing to her!"

"No, no, trust me it will not. If I have read that gentle lady's heart aright, she has been always hoping to see you; and with the expectation that is born of hope, she has been always looking for you. No strange, unnatural appearance will you seem to Lady Hurst-Monceaux, believe me. And, moreover, she has reason to expect you now. Listen, sir! It was the day after I heard her story of Captain Dugald's midnight visit and the evil it brought her, I begged from her the loan of that miniature which I showed you. And I do think she half-suspected the use that I was about to put it to. She lent it to me freely, without question and without reserve. And she knew at the time that I was going directly to your presence. And, finally, on the day before yesterday, when writing to Judge Merlin, I mentioned my hope that you would accompany me to Edinburgh. So you see, Lady Hurst-Monceaux is not entirely unprepared to receive you."

"Ah! but how will she receive me, Ishmael? And how indeed shall I present myself to her?"

"She will welcome you with joy; believe it! But you need not take her by surprise, even supposing that she does not expect you. Indeed, in no event, would it be well that you should risk doing so. When we reach Cameron Court you can remain in the carriage, while I go in, and to her ladyship alone announce your arrival."

"Thank you, Ishmael. Your plan is a good one, and I will adopt it. And now another thing, my dear boy. Ishmael, you have always refused to be publicly acknowledged as my son—"

"You know why; I will not have unmerited reproach thrown upon my sainted mother's memory. She was a martyr to your mistake; it must never be supposed that she was a victim to her own weakness."

"Enough, Ishmael! enough; I will not urge the point, although heaven only knows how great is the sacrifice I make in resigning the hope that you would take my name and inherit what is left of the family estates. But there, Ishmael, I will say no more upon that point! You will continue to bear your mother's name—the name that you have already made famous—and that, I feel sure, you will make illustrious. So no more of that. But what I wished particularly to consult you about is the propriety of confiding to the countess the secret of our relationship. Ishmael, it shall be just as you please."

"Then tell her all; have no secrets from the countess; she merits all your confidence; but tell her the circumstances under which you married my dear mother, that Nora Worth may be held blameless by her for ever," said Ishmael, solemnly.

It was strange to hear this middle-aged gentleman seeking counsel from this young man; but so it was that all who were brought within the circle of Ishmael's influence consulted him. Ishmael had not the experience that only age can bring; but he had that clear, strong, moral, and intellectual insight which only purity of heart and life can give. And hence his counsels were always wise and good.

It was six o'clock when they reached Cameron Court.

When the carriage drew up before the principal entrance, Ishmael observed that Mr. Brudnell had become very much agitated.

"Compose yourself, dear sir; compose yourself with the reflection that it is only a loving woman you are about to meet—a woman who loves you constantly and will welcome you with delight. Remain here until I go in and announce your visit; then I will return for you," he said, pressing Mr. Brudnell's hand as he left the carriage.

The professor opened the door for Mr. Worth. There was no regular porter at Cameron Court, but old James Morris was acting in that capacity.

"All well, professor?"

"All well, sir. The judge and Lady Vincent have gone out for an airing in the close carriage. We expect them back to dinner, which will be served presently. You are just in time, sir."

Ishmael was for once glad to hear that the judge and his daughter were absent, and that the countess was alone. But then suddenly he reflected that this latter supposition was not so certain, and he anxiously inquired:

"Is the countess at home, professor?"

"Yes, sir, her ladyship is in the library, reading."

"Alone?"

"Quite alone, sir."

"That will do; I can find her," said Ishmael, ascending the stairs and turning in the direction of the library, which was situated on the first floor.

Berenice, dressed in a rich but simply made black velvet robe, with delicate white lace under-sleeves and collar, sat near the centre-table before the fire, reading. Her head was bent over her book, and her rich black ringlets fell forward, half shading her beautiful dark face.

She raised her eyes when Ishmael entered, and seeing who it was, she threw aside her book, and started up to meet him.

"Welcome, Mr. Worth—welcome back again!" she said, offering her hand.

Ishmael took that beautiful little brown hand, and held it within his own, as he said:

"Thank you, Lady Hurst-Monceaux. I am really very glad to get back. But—"

"What, Mr. Worth?"

"I do not come alone, Lady Hurst-Monceaux."

Her countenance suddenly changed. Her voice sank to a whisper, as she inquired:

"Who is with you?"

Dropping his voice to the low tone of hers, Ishmael answered:

"Mr. Brudnell."

The countess snatched her hand from his grasp, threw herself into the nearest chair, and covered her face with her hands, and so remained for several minutes.

At last Ishmael approached, and leaned over her, and speaking in a subdued and gentle voice, said:

"This visit is not wholly unexpected, Lady Hurst-Monceaux?"

"No, no, Mr. Worth," she murmured, without removing her hands.

"Nor unwelcome, I hope?"

"No, oh, no!" she said, dropping her hands now and looking up, pale and faintly smiling.

"You will see him, then?" said Ishmael, speaking, as he had spoken throughout the interview, in a low, gentle voice.

"Presently. Give me a little time. Oh, I have waited for him so long, Ishmael!" she said, with an involuntary burst of confidence. But then every one, even the most reserved, confided in Ishmael Worth.

"I have waited for him so long—so long!" she repeated.

"He has come at last, dearest lady—come to devote his life to you, if you will accept the offering," Ishmael murmured, bending over her.

"Oh, Mr. Worth, I am sure that I owe this happiness to you!" the countess exclaimed, fervently, clasping his hand and holding it while she repeated—

"Blessed are the peace-makers!"

Slowly and reverently Ishmael bowed his head at the hearing of these words.

"Where is he, Mr. Worth?" at length inquired Berenice.

"In the carriage outside, awaiting your pleasure."

"Bring him to me, then," she said, pressing his hand warmly before she relinquished it.

Ishmael returned that pressure, and then went out to speak to Mr. Brudnell.

"Come in; she invites you," he said.

Herman Brudnell stepped out of the carriage and entered with Ishmael. He threw his eyes around upon the magnificence that surrounded him. Was all this really to be his own? the gift of that sweet lady's alighted love. He could scarcely believe it.

Ishmael led him through the halls and up the stairs to the library.

"She is in there, alone," he whispered.

"Go in with me, Ishmael," whispered the other.

But Ishmael shook his head, smiled, opened the door, announced:

"Mr. Brudnell, Lady Hurst-Monceaux," shut it, and retired.

Herman Brudnell found himself alone in the library with his long-neglected wife.

She was sitting in the arm-chair, where Ishmael had left her. She arose to meet her visitor; then suddenly turned deadly pale and sank back in her chair, overcome by her emotions, but even in so sinking she stretched her hands out to him in welcome, in invitation, in entreaty.

Slowly and deferentially he approached this woman, so faithful in her changeless love. And dropping on one knee, beside her chair, he bent his head and murmured in a broken voice:

"Berenice—Berenice—can you forgive all these long, long years of cruel injustice?"

"Oh, bless you! bless you, Herman, for coming at last! I am so glad, so glad to see you!" she said, drawing his bowed head to her bosom, dropping her face caressingly upon it and bursting into tears.

A few minutes passed and he was sitting by her side, with her hand clasped in his, telling her the story of the sinful and sorrowful past, and imploring her forgiveness.

Would she forgive him?

Reader! Berenice was one of those women whom the wisdom of this world can never understand; one of those women who love purely and passionately; who love but once and for ever. She loved Herman Brudnell! And in saying this I answer all questions. She would not acknowledge that she had anything to forgive; she was glad to give him herself and all that she possessed. And in giving all, she received all, for as she loved she was happy.

After some little time had elapsed, and they had both recovered from the agitation of the meeting, the countess looked up to him and inquired:

"Who is Ishmael Worth? Who is this young man, so stately, yet so gracious? so commanding, yet so meek? who walks among other men as a young king should, but as a young king never does! Who is he?"

"He is my son," said Herman Brudnell, proudly but shyly; "my son, the child of that unfortunate marriage contracted when I supposed that you were lost to me! lost to me in every way, my Berenice! That marriage of which I have already told you. Do you forgive me, for him, also, Berenice?"

"I congratulate you on him; for he is a son to be very proud of. I glory in him, for he is now my son also!" said this generous woman, fervently.

Herman Brudnell raised her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Oh, Herman, I knew it! I knew it twenty years ago, when I went to the Hill Cottage, and begged the babe to bring up as my own!" she said.

"You did! Berenice, how divinely good you are!"

"Good! Why I only sought my own comfort in the babe! You were lost to me for the time, and your child was the best consolation I could have found. However, his stern kinswoman would not let me have him—would not even let me help him; denied that he was yours, and almost turned me out of doors."

"That was so like Hannah."

"But now at last he is mine—my gifted son! How I shall rejoice in him!"

"He is yours, Berenice, as far as the most profound esteem and love can make him yours. But Ishmael will never consent to be publicly acknowledged by me," said Herman Brudnell, sorrowfully.

"But why?" inquired the countess, in astonishment.

"For his mother's sake. Ishmael cherishes the most chivalric devotion for his angel mother, and, I think, also for all mortal women, for her sake. He bears her name, and is fond of it, and will ever bear it, that whatever fame he may win in this world may be identified with it. He has vowed, with the blessing of heaven, to make the name of Worth illustrious, and he will do so."

"A chivalric notion, truly: and how beautiful it is! He is already, though so young, a distinguished member of the bar, I hear. How did he get his education and his profession—that poor boy, whom I remember in his childhood as tramping the country with the old odd-job man—that very 'professor' who attends him as his servant now? You found him and educated him at last, I suppose, Herman?"

A fiery flush arose to Mr. Brudnell's brow, displacing its habitual paleness.

"No, Berenice, no—not to me, nor to any human being does Ishmael owe education or profession, but to himself alone. Never was a boy born in this world under more adverse circumstances. His infancy was a struggle for the very breath of life; his childhood

for bread; his youth for education; and nobly, nobly has he sustained his struggle, and gloriously has he succeeded. We are yet in our prime, my dear Berenice, and I feel sure that if we live out the three-score years and ten allotted as the term of life, we shall see Ishmael become great."

So carried away had Mr. Brudnell been in making this tribute to Ishmael that he had forgotten to explain the circumstances that would have exonerated him from the suspicion of having culpably neglected his child. Berenice brought him back to his recollection by saying:

"But I am sure you must have made some provision for this boy; how was it then that he never derived any benefit from it? How was it that he was left from the hour of his birth to suffer the cruellest privations, until the age of seven years, when he began to support himself, and to help to support his aunt?"

"You are right, Berenice; I made a provision for him; but I left the country, and he never had the good of it. I will explain how that was by-and-bye; but I believe the loss of it was providential. I believe it was intended from the first that Ishmael should owe no man anything, for life, or bread, or education, or profession; but all to his own efforts. He is self-made. I know of no other man to whom the term can be so perfectly well applied."

"Will you tell me all you know of his early struggles? I am so interested in this stately son of yours," said Berenice, who, while admiring Ishmael herself, saw also that he was the theme above all others that Mr. Brudnell loved to dwell upon.

Herman Brudnell told the story of Ishmael's heroic young life, as he had gathered it from many sources.

And Berenice listened in admiration, in wonder, and sometimes in tears.

And yet it was only the plain story of a poor boy who struggled up out of the depths of poverty, shame and ignorance, to competence, honour and distinction; a story that may be repeated again in the person of the obscurest boy that reads these lines.

After a little while, given to meditation on what she had heard, Berenice, with her hand still clasped in that of Herman Brudnell, looked up at him and said:

"Your mother and sisters?"

Slowly and sadly Mr. Brudnell shook his head:

"Ah, Berenice, I shall have to tell you now of a family self-married as a set-off to the boy self-made!"

And then he told the grievous story of the decadence of the Brudnell ladies, not of course forgetting the mad marriage of his sister Eleanor Brudnell with the profligate Captain Dugald.

While Berenice was still wondering over these family mistakes and misfortunes, a footman opened the door, and said:

"My lady, dinner is served."

"Have Judge Merlin and Lady Vincent returned from their drive?" inquired the countess.

"Yes, my lady; the judge and her ladyship are in the drawing-room with Mr. Worth."

"Mr. Brudnell, will you give me your arm?" said the countess, rising, with a smile.

Herman Brudnell bowed and complied. And they left the library and passed on to the little drawing-room.

As they entered, they saw Judge Merlin, Ishmael and Claudia standing, grouped in conversation, near the fire.

The situation of this long severed and suddenly re-united pair was certainly rather embarrassing, especially to the lady; and to almost any other one it would have been overwhelming. But Berenice was a refined, cultivated and dignified woman of society; such a woman never loses her self-possession, she is always mistress of the situation. Berenice was so now. But for the bright light in her usually pensive dark eyes, and the rosy flush of her habitually pale cheeks, there was no difference in her aspect, as, with her hand lightly resting on Mr. Brudnell's arm, she advanced towards the group.

Claudia turned around, not altogether in surprise, for Ishmael had thoughtfully prepared them all for this new addition to the family circle.

"Lady Vincent, I believe you have already met my husband, Mr. Brudnell," said the countess, gravely presenting him to her guest. And the force of her words purposely revealed the reconciliation that had just been sealed.

"Oh, yes, I know Mr. Brudnell well, and am very glad to see him again," said Claudia offering her hand. "I had the honour of passing some weeks in Lady Vincent's company at her father's house," said Mr. Brudnell, gravely bowing.

He next turned and shook hands with Judge Merlin. But the old man retained his hand, and took also that of the countess, and as the tear sprang to his aged eyes, he said:

"Dear Brudnell, and dearest lady, I sympathize with you in this reunion with all my heart! May you be very happy! God bless you!" and pressing both their hands, he relinquished them.

Mr. Brudnell and the countess simultaneously bowed in silent acknowledgment of this benediction.

Claudia involuntarily looked up to Ishmael's face; their eyes met—hers betraying the yearning anguish of a famishing heart, and his the most earnest sympathy, the most reverential compassion. Why did Claudia look at him so? Ah! because she could not help it! What was she dreaming of? Perhaps of another possible reunion, that should compensate her for all the woeful past, and bless her in all the happy future!

A moment more, and the folding doors connecting the drawing-room with the dining-room were thrown open.

"Mr. Brudnell, will you take Lady Vincent in to dinner?" said the countess, with a smile, as she herself gave her hand to Ishmael.

And thus they passed into the dining-room.

But for the sadness of one mourning spirit present, the dinner was a pleasant one. And the reunion in the drawing-room that evening was calmly happy.

CHAPTER CXXII

HOME AGAIN.

Music sweet! music soft!
Lingers round the place,
And oh! I feel the childhood's charm
That time cannot efface!

It had been decided in consultation between Judge Merlin and Ishmael that, under existing circumstances, it would be proper for their party to shorten their visit to Cameron Court, and leave the recently reconciled pair to the enjoyment of their own exclusive company.

And accordingly, while they were all seated at luncheon the next day, Wednesday, Judge Merlin announced their departure for Thursday morning.

This announcement was met by a storm of hospitable expostulation. Both the countess and Mr. Brudnell strongly objected to the early departure of their visitors, and urged their prolonged stay.

But to all this friendly solicitation, the judge replied:

"My dear countess, painful as it will be to us all to leave Cameron Court, there are imperative reasons for our doing so."

"I fear, the truth is," said the countess, smiling, "that you are all weary of Cameron Court. Well, I will no longer oppose your departure. Very early in life, I learned the two-fold duty of hospitality: 'to greet the coming, speed the parting guest.'"

"Lady Hurst-Monceaux, we are not weary of Cameron Court. On the contrary, we are attached to it; we have been happier here than we could have been anywhere else, while under our adverse circumstances; and we shall take leave of you, madam, with the deepest regret—regret only to be softened by the hope of seeing you some time in England," said the judge, gravely.

The countess bowed and smiled, but did not in any other manner reply.

"Oh, Berenice! dear Berenice! you will come to see us some time, will you not?" urged Claudia.

The countess looked towards her husband with that proud, fond deference which loving wives glory in bestowing, and she said:

"When Mr. Brudnell visits his mother and sisters, I shall, of course, accompany him, and we shall spend a portion of our time at Tanglewood, if you will permit us."

"Berenice! Berenice! what words you use! You know how happy we should be to see you!" said Claudia.

"And how honoured!" said the judge.

Lady Hurst-Monceaux smiled on Claudia, and bowed to the judge.

And then the circle arose from the luncheon table and dispersed.

That day Ishmael wrote to Beatrice, announcing the speedy return of himself and his party. And Judge Merlin wrote to Reuben Gray, to have the house at Tanglewood prepared.

Early on Thursday morning, our party took a most affectionate leave of their friends at Cameron Court, and set out on their homeward journey.

Only one night they rested in Edinburgh, and on Friday morning they took the shortest route home.

It was nine o'clock at night when they reached Tanglewood.

Hannah and Reuben were standing out under the starlight, listening for the sound of wheels, and they ran forward to greet them as they alighted from the carriage.

"Oh, welcome—welcome home, sir! Thank God, I receive you safe again!" exclaimed Reuben Gray,

as he grasped the judge's extended hand, and wept for joy.

"Thank you—thank you, Gray! I'm happy to be home once more."

"Oh, my boy—my boy! Oh, my boy—my boy! Do I see you again? Do I really see you again? Thank heaven—oh, thank heaven!" cried Hannah, bursting into a passion of tears, as she threw her arms around Ishmael's neck, and was pressed to his affectionate heart.

"God bless you, dear Aunt Hannah! I am very glad to come to you again! How are the little ones?"

"Oh, as well as possible, dear."

"Speak to Lady Vincent," whispered Ishmael.

"Madam, I am very glad to see you home once more, but sorry to see you in such deep mourning," said Hannah, respectfully.

Judge Merlin then hurried the whole party out of the biting winter air into the house, where they found all things ready for them.

They took time to make only a very slight toilet in their well-warmed chambers, and then they went down to supper.

After supper they all went into the well-warmed and lighted crimson drawing-room; and Claudia sat down before her grand piano, and tried its keys. From long disuse it was somewhat out of tune, certainly, but her fingers evoked from those keys a beautiful prelude, and her voice arose in a simple but soul-stirring little ballad: "Home Again."

As she sang Ishmael came up behind her, turned the leaves of her music book and accompanied her in his rich bass voice.

At the end of that one song she arose and closed the piano.

"Thank you, my dear," said the Judge, drawing his daughter to him and kissing her cheek. "Your song was very appropriate; there is not one here who could not heartily enter into its sentiment."

Slowly and sadly Claudia bowed her head; and then she passed on to one of the side-tables, took up a lighted bedroom candle, bade them all good night and retired.

And soon after this, Ishmael and the judge separated and retired to their respective chambers.

Ishmael was shown into that one which he had occupied during that eventful first sojourn at Tanglewood. How full of the most interesting associations—the most tender memories—that chamber was! There was the bed upon which he had lain for weeks a mangled sufferer for Claudia's sake. There was the very same arm-chair in which she had sat hour after hour by his side, beguiling the tedious days of convalescence by talking with him, reading to him, or singing and playing to him on her guitar. Sigh after sigh burst from Ishmael's bosom as he remembered these times. He went to bed, but could not sleep; he lay awake meditating.

While Ishmael was thus restless in his lonely chamber, another scene was going on in another part of the house.

Old Katy was holding a reception in the kitchen, where all the servants were assembled to welcome Katy and her companions home and hear their wondrous adventures.

Now, if Katy had only related the plain facts as they had happened, her story had been sufficiently interesting to her simple hearers.

But Katy exaggerated her adventures, wrongs, and sufferings beyond all hope of pardon.

The next morning, before breakfast, Ishmael walked through the forest to Woodside, to see the little children of whom he was so fond.

They were already up and waiting for him at the gate. On seeing him they rushed out to meet him with exclamations of joy, and laid hold of his overcoat, and began to pull him towards the house.

Ishmael smiled on them, and talked to them, and would have taken them up in his arms, but that his arms were already full; for under one was Molly's family of dolls, and under the other Johnny's box of tools, which he had not forgotten.

Smilingly he suffered them to pull him into the house, and push him into the arm-chair, and climb up on his knees, and seize and search his parcels.

Molly knew her parcel by the feet of the dolls protruding through one end of the paper, and she quickly laid hands on it, sat down flat on the floor, and tore it to pieces, revealing its contents to her delighted eyes.

Meanwhile Johnny had torn open his box of miniature carpenter's tools, and run out to try their edges on the fences and outhouses.

At the moment that Ishmael sat Molly down upon the floor, Hannah came in from a back room, where she had been at work.

On seeing the dolls, she lifted both her hands, and cried out:

"Oh, Ishmael, Ishmael, what extravagances!"

"Not at all, aunt. Look at little Molly. See how much happiness has been purchased at a trifling outlay, and I like no more of extravagance," said Ishmael, rising and taking his hat.

"Where are you going now? You have not been here a minute," said Hannah.

"Pardon me! I have been here half-an-hour, and now I must go back to Tanglewood, because they will wait breakfast for me there."

"Well, I declare!" wrathfully began Hannah, but Ishmael gently interrupted her:

"I have bought a fine Scotch tartan shawl for you, Aunt Hannah, and a heavy shepherd's maid for Uncle Reuben. They are such articles as you cannot purchase in this neighbourhood. I will send them to you by one of the servants. I would have brought them myself, only you see my arms were full."

"Well, I should think so. Thank you, Ishmael! Thank you very much indeed. But when are you coming here to stop a bit?"

"Just as soon as I can, Aunt Hannah. This morning I must go to the Beacon; you may well suppose how anxious I am to be there!"

"Humph! I thought now Lady Vincent was a widder, ah that was over!"

"Aunt Hannah, what do you take me for?" exclaimed the young man, in sorrowful astonishment.

"Well, Ishmael, I didn't mean to insult you, so you needn't bite my head off!" snapped Mrs. Gray.

"Good-bye, Aunt Hannah!" said Ishmael, stooping and kissing her cheek.

He hurried away, and walked briskly through the woods, and reached the house in good time for breakfast.

And a happy breakfast it was, but for one sad face there!

The old man was so delighted to be home again, under his own forest-shaded roof, seated at his own table, attended by his own affectionate servants, that it seemed as though the years had rolled back in their course, and restored to him all the freshness of his youth.

After breakfast, Ishmael arose, and announced his departure for the Beacon, and requested of the judge the loan of two saddle-horses.

"Ishmael, you have refused all compensation, beyond your travelling expenses, for your services. And, I know, indeed, they were of a nature that money could not repay. Yet I do wish to make you some more substantial acknowledgment than empty words of my indebtedness to you. Now, there is my Arab horse, Mahomet. He is a gift worthy of even your acceptance, Ishmael. He has not his equal anywhere. I refused three hundred pounds for him before I went to Scotland. I will not lend him to you, Ishmael. I will beg your acceptance of him—there, now, don't refuse. I shall never use him again, and Claudia cannot, for he is not a lady's horse, you know."

"I shall never ride again," here put in Claudia, in a sorrowful voice.

Ishmael started and turned towards her; but she had arisen from the table and withdrawn to the window-seat.

Judge Merlin continued to press his gift upon the young man. But, though Ishmael had almost a passion for fine horses, he hesitated to accept this magnificent present, until he saw that his refusal would give the judge great pain.

Then, with sincere expressions of gratitude, he frankly accepted it.

The judge rang a bell and ordered Mahomet to be saddled and brought round for Mr. Worth, and a groom's horse for his servant.

When the horses were announced, Ishmael went and shook hands with his host.

"God bless you, Ishmael! God bless you my dear boy for all that you have done for me and mine! And speed the time when you shall be nearer to me than at present!" said the judge, pressing both Ishmael's hands before he released them.

Ishmael then crossed the room to take leave of Claudia.

She was sitting in the arm-chair, within the recess of the bay-window; her elbow rested on a little stand at her side, and her head was bowed upon her hand; this was her usual attitude now.

"Farewell, Lady Vincent," said Ishmael in a grave sweet voice, as he stood before her.

She raised her head and looked at him. Oh, what a world of grief, despair and passionate remorse was expressed in those large, dark, tearless eyes!

"Farewell, Lady Vincent," said Ishmael, deferentially taking her hand.

Her fingers closed spasmodically upon his, as though she would hold him to her side, for ever.

"Oh, must it be indeed, farewell, Ishmael?" she breathed in a voice expiring with anguish.

"Farewell," he repeated gravely, kindly, reverentially bowing low over the throbbing hand he held; and then he turned and softly left the room.

"It is his sense of honour! Oh it is his chivalric, nay, his fanatical sense of honour that is ruining us! Unless Beatrice has the good taste and modesty to release him voluntarily, he will sacrifice me, himself, and her, to the Moloch, Honour!" wailed Claudia, as she dropped her head upon her hands in a grief too deep for tears!

Was she right?

(To be continued.)

TALKING ABOUT ONE'S SELF.

AVOID very frequent conversation on any subject in which you are notoriously interested. If you have a specialty in politics, religion, or in any other direction, it will be often enough referred to by others without your introducing it. If you are physically strong or handsome, or accomplished in any arts, do not make strength and beauty and your favourite abilities, even indirectly, a frequent subject of discussion.

Beware of a peculiar form of vanity which consists in making confidences of your private affairs to many people, and in binding every acquaintance to solemn secrecy as to this or that matter relative to yourself or friends. Weak people often think by such confidence to attract intimacy, but the confided-in seldom fail, on reflection, to attribute it to mere vanity.

Of all follies, never seek to make capital in general conversation by communicating to any mortal whatever, your misfortunes, grievances and losses. Whatever momentary sympathy you may attract will, in too many cases be entirely neutralized on the fatal sober second thought of those in whom you may confide. That is a pitiful vanity indeed, which would sooner expose its defeats from fortune than not talk of self. More absurd still is the confession of your private faults and vices—a species of vanity frequent enough among would-be romantic people of a school which is now becoming generally ridiculous.

On this subject a French writer has well remarked that, "you should always avoid mention of yourself, since, if it be a eulogium, people will regard it as a lie; while, if you criticize yourself, they will take you at your word, and accept it as an article of faith."

In short, never allude in any way, or under any circumstances, where it can be avoided, to your own excellences or defects.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewit," "The Prelate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

All live by seeming,
The beggar begs with it, and the gay courtier
Gains land and title, rank and rule, by seeming;
The clergy scorn it not; and the bold soldier
Will owe with it his service. All admit it—
All practise it. And he who is content
With showing what he is, shall have small credit
In church, or camp, or state. So wags the world.
Old Play.

FRANK's first visit, on his arrival in town, was to the Earl of Moretown, by whom he was most graciously received—for it had been the desire of the peer to get the farm into his own hands—his steward having persuaded him that it would fetch a much higher rental if divided into separate holdings. As the lease had many years to run, his lordship looked upon its surrender as a windfall.

"I am sorry, Mr. Hazleton," said the noble hypocrite, "to lose so excellent a tenant. I thought that you were doing well upon the farm?"

"I have no fault, my lord, to find with the land," replied his visitor; "and will not belie my feelings by saying that I quit it without regret! But duty impels me!"

"Duty!" Frank briefly explained to him the disappearance of his sister. Fortunately he did not allude to Lady Sinclair—otherwise the request which he came to proffer might not have been so favourably listened to.

"Very strange!" observed Lord Moretown, who concluded that some wealthy rake had taken a fancy to Bell, and carried her off; "and I cannot but admire the sacrifice you have made. Is there any way in which I can serve you?"

"It was to ask your lordship's influence that I troubled you with this visit," was the reply.

Satisfied, from the word "influence," that nothing in the shape of compensation for the surrender of his lease was expected, his landlord was all smiles.

"Only point out the way in which I can serve you," he said, "and you may command me!"

As briefly as possible Frank stated the position of Willie, who had deserted from one of his Majesty's ships. Aware, from the boy's statement, that Mr. Coppin, the steward, had been the instrument employed in forcing him to sea, he prudently avoided any allusion to his former residence at Borderclough. Not that he

suspected the earl to have had any share in the transaction—but experience had made him cautious.

The discharge of a boy from the service was a trifling request for a man in Lord Moretown's position to make. Satisfied that the request of his late tenant did not tax his interest on a more serious matter, his lordship at once wrote a letter to his brother-in-law, the Duke of Ayrton, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

"This is Thursday," he observed, as he sealed it; "leave day. You are fortunate! Show your letter to the messenger on duty at the Admiralty, and he will at once procure you an interview."

Gratefully thanking him, his visitor withdrew. He had obtained all that he desired.

The peer rang for his valet to dress, and ordered the carriage at three—for he had an appointment with his lawyer.

In his way to the Admiralty, Frank called at the mansion of Sir Cuthbert, to inquire if the baronet—who had promised to meet him in London—had arrived in town.

"Is your name Hazleton, sir?" inquired the porter.

"It is."

"My master will see you," said the man, ringing for one of the footmen to conduct him to the library; indeed, he has been anxiously expecting you!"

"When did he arrive?"

"Two days since."

On entering the apartment, the young farmer was struck by the change which their brief separation had worked in the appearance of the baronet. He was not only much thinner, but his eye had lost its fire, and his voice its tone and energy. The old man stretched out his hand, and welcomed his visitor with almost childish satisfaction.

"Thank heaven," he said, "you are come! I began to think that you, too, had deserted me. Have you heard—Do not keep me in suspense. You know the question I would ask."

"I have indeed been fortunate enough to obtain a clue," replied the young man, "which has materially lessened the anxiety I felt on Mar—on my sister's account," he added, correcting himself; "for it has proved to me that the author of the outrage is Lady Sinclair's father."

"Yes—yes!" murmured Sir Cuthbert, with a sigh; "I believe that you are right! My nephew had no hand in it I am convinced of that!"

Frank did not feel so convinced—for he recollected what Willie had stated—that there were two persons who appeared to command the Shark. One he knew to be Ned Cantor; the question was, the name of the other. But, in pity to the feelings of the husband of Margaret, he kept his suspicions to himself and simply inquired how he had arrived at so positive a conclusion.

"On my arrival in town," said the baronet, "I endeavoured by every means to discover Harry's abode—but in vain: he had left his chambers. As a last resource, I called upon the bankers through whom he received the trifling annuity his father left him: they told me that he was in Switzerland!"

His visitor could not conceal his surprise.

"Nay, it is positive," continued the speaker; "for they produced to me his letters: one dated a fortnight previous to the perpetration of the infamous outrage upon my happiness and honour; the second written on the very day it occurred. The first was from Lausanne; the other, if I remember rightly, bore the postmark of Geneva!"

The farmer could not repress an exclamation of pleasure. It seemed as if a weight had been suddenly removed from his heart. He could not doubt such testimony.

Unpractised in the villanies of the world, little did either of them imagine that the letters which inspired them with such confidence had both been written in the office of Quirk, who, in order to avert suspicion from Harry Sinclair, had artfully arranged the means to prove, if necessary, his absence from England at the moment he was carrying out his infamous design against the happiness of his uncle.

Phineas had started upon a continental tour, with a passport in the name of his confederate: he it was who had posted the letter.

Fearful of missing the opportunity of procuring Willie's discharge, Frank took his leave, promising to visit Sir Cuthbert in the evening.

"Stay!" said the old man; "I have one piece of information which you will rejoice to hear. I have received a letter from Charles: he is a father!"

The lips of the speaker quivered as he pronounced the word—for he doubted whether he should ever live to hear the voice of Margaret's child hail him by that honoured name.

"It is a boy, too!" he added, with a sigh; "he is happy! But I dare not think of it—it unmans me. The heart which battled sternly with the storms of life—which firmly beat upon the field of honour—is broken—broken."

His visitor wrung his hand in silent sympathy, and took his leave. As he hastened down Parliament Street, "chewing," as the poet says, "the cud of sweet and bitter fancies," he was startled from his reverie by hearing his name pronounced. Looking up, he recognized a young barrister, whom he had known on his first visit to Scotland.

"Hazleton!"

"Bolton!"

Such were the exclamations, accompanied by a warm shake of the hands, with which they saluted each other.

"Why, Frank," said the man of law, "what the deuce has happened to you—you look as dull as a barrister of ten years' standing, who has not yet seen his first brief? You who used to be so light-hearted and jocular."

"I am indeed most unfortunate," replied his friend. "Sorry to hear it," answered Bolton; "the world has used me fairly since we parted; but this is not the place to converse; come and see me at my chambers. My purse is not very deep, but as far as it extends, I'll share it willingly with an old friend."

"Thank you—thank you," said Frank, shaking him once more by the hand; "but my misfortunes are not of the nature you suppose."

"Ah! an affair of the heart!" exclaimed the lawyer. "I see. Friendship cannot help you there. But promise me, at any rate, that you will come and see me!"

"On one condition."

"Name it!"

"That you receive me alone. I am in no case for society," said the young man, with a sigh.

"Be it as you please. But when may I expect you?"

"To-morrow evening."

"To-morrow be it!" replied Bolton; "6 A, Serjeant's Inn. You can't mistake it—you will see the name upon the door."

"He is a shrewd fellow," thought Frank, as he resumed his way towards the Admiralty; "and, I am convinced, a true friend. I'll consult him upon my future proceedings—his advice may be of service; and even should it prove otherwise, his sympathy will be a consolation."

Quirk, who had resolved by any means to amass a fortune for his grandson that should compensate him for the loss of Broadlands, had inquired several times, after his arrival at chambers, for his letters. None had arrived, and the old schemer felt terribly disappointed.

Snapo, who silently watched his every movement, felt assured that some piece of villany was upon the tapis, and felt anxious to find it out—the discovery might one day be useful to him.

"Why does the fool linger?" he muttered; "running the risk of being recognized, and rendering all my precautions useless. He ought to have been in London at least a week since; his folly will endanger all my plans. I have spent two thousand pounds already—and I will spend as much more but I will bring it to a prosperous conclusion. Sir Cuthbert dead, and the estates once in possession of his nephew, then will be my harvest! He shall be my factor, and receive the produce. But I must be patient—the present is but the sowing of the seed."

Such were his reflections when the Earl of Moretown was announced; at the same time Snapo brought him the long-expected letter.

"Pardon me, my lord," said the lawyer, as he hastily broke the seal; "but this is an affair of the most pressing importance."

The peer bowed stiffly: he could not comprehend how any affair should take precedence of his.

Quirk ran his eye quickly over the letter, the contents of which alarmed him. It informed him that the writer, in his journey from Scotland had met a boy, named Willie, whom he had seen on board the Shark; that the lad had resided formerly at Bordercleugh, and recognized Ned Cantor, who had promised to dispose of him, but failed to keep his word. His correspondent, who signed himself, "You Know Who," added, in a postscript, that, on the following Saturday night, he would call upon him at his office.

"Now, my lord," said the old man, carefully placing the letter in his pocket-book, "I am at your service."

The conversation turned upon a vacancy for one of his noble client's boroughs. He required some safe person to hold the seat till his son should be of age, when he was to pledge himself to resign it in his favour.

"You do not intend, then," observed Mr. Quirk, "that the viscount should follow his profession?"

"Till he gets posted," answered his lordship, carelessly. "It gives a man—especially a young one—a certain weight in the House. If my son had not been a little wild, he might have been promoted before this. But boys will be boys."

The lawyer smiled. He knew what the wildness of

the viscount—as his father mildly characterised it—had cost.

He ran over a list of persons whom he thought eligible, and knew to be willing to pay for the honour of holding the seat till his client's son should take it.

"Sir Ephraim Molasses?"

"A parvenu!" replied the peer. "My borough must be represented by a gentleman!"

"Colonel Norden, then!"

His lordship shrugged his shoulders.

"Admiral Wilton?"

"The man who was shelved by the government for the severity of his discipline, I think! He is in bad odour!"

"He wants to get afloat again!" observed Quirk, "and has long been on the look-out for a seat. He is very rich, and would pay handsomely—very handsomely!"

"I will think of him," said his lordship, doubtfully. "Shall I communicate with him, and—"

"Not till I have seen my brother-in-law," interrupted his client, "and consulted him as to how far it would be agreeable at the Admiralty. How provoking!" he added; "I only wrote to him this morning, to request the discharge of a sailor-boy who had cut from his ship!"

At the word "sailor-boy," Quirk became all attention. He knew perfectly well the means by which the Shark had been manned, and the possibility struck him that it might be the very lad Harry had mentioned in his letter.

"Do you remember the name of the boy, my lord?" he inquired.

"Let me see!" answered the peer; "Willie—Willie, something! But I am sure it was Willie!"

The lawyer was a man of action. Had he but displayed in an honourable course half the energy and talent he had wasted on his unprincipled schemes, he would in all probability have been one of the brightest ornaments of his profession.

"Do you think it at all likely it will be granted?" he inquired.

"Doubtless."

"My lord," said the old man, "I have no time to explain the reason of the request I am about to make—but to me it is a most important one. Oblige me by writing to the duke, requesting him to refuse all application on the subject."

The earl had too much experience in the game of life not to perceive, from the tone in which the favour was asked, that it was of the utmost moment to the speaker. Without a word he seated himself at the desk, and wrote the letter as desired.

Quirk rang the bell.

"My carriage, instantly!" he said, to the clerk who answered it. Then, turning to his client, he apologised for quitting him, saying that he would wait upon his lordship the following morning.

From Serjeant's Inn the lawyer drove to the house of the Duke of Ayrton, who gave him a note to the head clerk at the Admiralty, annulling the order he had given only a few hours previously for the discharge of Willie.

"Too late!" said the official, as he read it: "I delivered it into his own hands an hour since!"

CHAPTER X.

For lowliness is young ambition's ladder.

Shakespeare.

"It is a strange tale!" exclaimed the young barrister, whose encounter with Frank Hazleton was related in the preceding chapter; "it is evident that the abduction of your sister was an unprovoked incident in the chapter of accidents. There could be no motive for the outrage in her case!"

"None," said his friend; "none."

"And you are determined to seek her?"

"Through the world!" replied the young farmer.

"I have given up my lease, sold off the stock upon my land, and in two days, at furthest, start upon my pilgrimage."

"In what direction?"

"Where Providence shall guide me!"

Bolton smiled. Although a very young man, he had looked upon the world with a curious eye. Necessity had been his tutor, and he had studied mankind to advantage under her iron rule.

"In the affairs of the world, Frank," he observed, "I never yet knew an individual trust to Providence, that it did not leave him in the lurch. Providence is the *ignis fatuus* which leads our steps astray—the polar star of the weak and incapable: not that I will do you the injustice to class you with either. I would as soon," he added, "risk my last guinea on the turn of the die, as permit Providence—or, in other words, accident—to guide me in any important step of life!"

"That sounds very like infidelity!" observed his visitor—for it was in the chambers of the last speaker

that the conversation we have narrated had taken place.

"Not in the least!" replied the barrister; "I am as sincere a believer as yourself, with this exception—that I neither expect miracles nor impossibilities. The action of Providence is limited by general laws, in particular cases, like the present, she leaves us to the guidance of reason—which is sure to be the safest pilot, because it is the one designed for us. Excuse me a few moments," he added, "whilst I write a note."

In a few minutes Bolton rang the bell. It was answered by a sharp, weazel-faced lad, about sixteen years of age. Frank was exceedingly struck by his appearance: there was a sly, restless expression in his small, hazel eyes—the index of a busy brain. Whilst listening to his master's orders, he fixed them for an instant steadily upon his, reflected for a moment, then nodded, as much as to say he understood all about it and left the room.

"Is that your clerk?" inquired the farmer.

"Clerk, chamber-counsel, cook, messenger, everything!" answered Bolton, with a smile. "You little imagine the ambitious dreams which haunt that singular, elf-like head. Would you believe it, he aspires to nothing less than becoming head-clerk to the Lord Chief Justice of England, and really expects that he shall attain to it?"

"He at least trusts to Providence!" observed his friend.

"Not in the least—he trusts to himself!" replied the barrister; "and something, perhaps, to me. Whilst he is absent I'll tell you his history; it is a curious one. About eight years ago, a ragged little urchin came regularly every day into the inn, and inquired of the clerks if they had errands for him to run, shoes to clean, or fires to light. It was long—very long—before he obtained the least encouragement; for the porters and laundresses, regarding him as an interloper, set their faces against him. At last one employed him, then another. Being found shrewd and honest, he gradually made his way, and was looked upon as one of the hangers-on about the offices."

"Well!" exclaimed Frank, who began to feel interested, "it is a singular story!"

"As his circumstances improved, so did his appearance," continued the narrator. "When I first came here I was too poor to employ a clerk—the rent of my chambers alone demanded half my income—but I knew the necessity of appearances, and made the sacrifice, so I employed Nip—that is the name he is known by. Finding him strictly honest, after a short time, I gave him permission to sleep in a large closet in the office. How do you suppose he employed the few shillings earned by the arrangement?"

"In clothing himself, no doubt?"

"In learning to read and write," said the barrister.

"He had seen quite enough to know that it was necessary, and, instead of trusting Providence, trusted to his own exertions. Struck by his perseverance, I assisted him—I may as well tell you all—I became his instructor myself, and Nip can now write a brief as well as I can!"

"Your care has not been thrown away!" observed his friend.

"Thrown away!" repeated Bolton; "he has repaid me a hundred-fold! His life is a moral and an example! When I am idle—for at times the mind will unbend—Nip grows nervous and anxious, places my books and papers continually in my view, and if that hint fails, breaks out into open remonstrance. He never trusted to Providence," added the speaker, "and you see the result!"

"It is a lesson," observed Frank Hazleton, "which I shall not fail to profit by!"

"I dare say you are wondering upon what expedition I have sent him?"

His friend confessed that his curiosity was in some degree excited, as he suspected that it regarded himself.

"You are right!" said the barrister, who had sent for a fellow whom he described as one of those instruments which honest men and rogues alike find necessary. "He served me," continued the speaker, "on an occasion when professional knowledge could not assist me. Nip hunted him out for me. He is quite a personage in his way. I believe he was originally a thief; if so, he has long discarded the occupation as unworthy of a man of genius, and taken to a more profitable calling."

"And what is his calling?"

"*Homme d'affaires*—in other words, a general agent, spy, go-between—anything in which tact and perseverance are requisite. Since my first acquaintance with him I have watched his career with no little anxiety, for he is one of those characters I like to speculate upon. I have met him in the crush-room of the opera, dressed in the height of fashion, and the next day, perhaps, encountered him as a beggar, soliciting charity. Fools, I suspect, are his bankers—their

crimes and passions his capital: and he draws largely upon both."

"His name?"

"No doubt he has a hundred," replied Bolton; "but the one I know him by is Banks!"

(To be continued.)

RUMOURD MINISTERIAL CHANGES.—There is a rumour—and the source from which it springs is a tolerably sure one—that Lord Palmerston intends dissolving Parliament in August; that he will then himself resign, and most probably place Lord Clarendon in his position, but will retain the power of advising; and be what the late Duke of Wellington and Lord Lansdowne were—the principal, though in the background. This is contemplated out of deference to Lady Palmerston's wish, who is most anxious the Premier should have some peace and rest.

FACTS ABOUT THE BODY.—The number of bones in the framework of the human body is 260, 108 of which are in the feet and hands, there being in each 27. The quantity of blood in adults is on an average about 80 lbs., which passes through the heart once in four minutes. Only one-tenth of the human body is solid matter. Egyptian mummies are bodies thoroughly dried; they usually weigh about 7 lbs. The lungs of an adult ordinarily inhale 20 cubic inches of air at once, and if we breathe 20 times in a minute, the quantity of air consumed in that time will be 800 cubic inches, or 48,000 inches in an hour, and 1,152,000 inches in a day, which is equal to 85 hogsheads.

APPROPRIATE.—An amusing circumstance occurred in a singing-school, some days ago. A Mr. Paine was the teacher, and a Miss Patience one of the pupils. In the course of the evening the teacher gave out the tune to the words:

"Come, gentle patience smile on pain."

The pupils were so excited by laughter that it was found impossible to sing the line. Soon the teacher gave out another, in which were the following lines:

"Oh, give me tears for others' woes,
And patience for my own."

The risibilities of the school were so affected, that all singing was deferred until another occasion.

A FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.—At his London house, Burghley had fourscore persons in family, exclusive of those who attended him at Court. His expenses there were £30 per week in his absence, and between £40 and £50 when present. At Theobalds he had thirty persons in family, and besides a constant allowance in charity he directed £10 a week to be laid out in keeping the poor at work in his gardens, &c. The expenses of his stables were 1000 marks (£666 13s. 4d.) a year. He kept a standing table for gentlemen, and two other tables for persons of meaner condition, which were always served alike whether he were in or out of town. About his person he had people of great distinction, and his domestic tells us that he could reckon up when he was in his service twenty gentlemen retainers, who had each £1,000 a year, and as many among his ordinary servants who were worth from £1,000 to £3,000, £5,000, £10,000 or £20,000.

PICTURES.—A room with pictures, and a room without pictures, differ about as much as a room with windows and a room without windows. Nothing is more melancholy, particularly to a person who has to pass much time in his room, than bleak walls and nothing on them, for pictures are loop-holes of escape for the soul, leading to other scenes and spheres. It is such an inexpressible relief to a person engaged in writing or even reading, on looking up, not to have his line of vision chopped off by an odious white wall, but to find his soul escaping, as it were, through the frame of an exquisite picture, to other beautiful, and, perhaps, heavenly scenes, where fancy for a moment may revel, refreshed and delighted. Thus, pictures are consolers of loneliness; they are a relief to a jaded mind; they are windows to the imprisoned thought; they are books, they are histories and sermons, which we can read without the trouble of turning over the leaves.

A CURIOUS ANECDOTE.—When Sir Francis Carew had rebuilt his mansion at Reddington, in Surrey, he planted the garden with choice fruit-trees. There he was visited by Queen Elizabeth; and Sir Hugh Platt, in his "Gardens of Eden," tells a curious anecdote relating to one of these visits:—"I conclude," says he, "with a consent of that delicate knight, Sir F. Carew, who, for the better accomplishment of his royal entertainment of our late Queen Elizabeth, led her majesty to a cherry tree, whose fruit he had on purpose kept back from ripening at least one month after all cherries had taken their farewell of England. This secret he performed by straining a tent, or cover of canvas over the whole tree, and wetting it now and then with a scoop, as the heat of the weather required; and so by withholding the sunbeams from reflecting upon the berries, they both grow great and were very long be-

fore they had gotten their perfect cherry colour; and when he was assured of her Majesty's coming, he removed the tent, and a few sunny days brought them to their maturity."

THE gold watch, value 15 guineas, offered by the Committee for the best poem on Shakespeare's birthday, has been won by Mr. John Harris, the far-famed miner-poet of Cornwall.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT RAILWAY.—Arrangements are making for opening the Isle of Wight Railway between Ryde and Shanklin. Twelve trains will run daily, and the distance will be performed in twenty minutes.

BE PUNCTUAL.—By punctuality we do not mean the merely being in time for lectures, dinners, &c., but that spirit out of which punctuality grows—that love of accuracy, precision, and vigour which make efficient men and women—the determination that what you have to do shall be done, in spite of all petty obstacles, and finished off at once and finally. We believe there is a story told of Nelson and his coachman, which is worthy of being recorded. When he was on the eve of departing for one of his great expeditions, the coachman said to him, "The carriage shall be at the door, at six o'clock." "A quarter before," said Nelson. "I have always been a quarter of an hour before my time, and it has made a man of me."

THE FATAL SECRET.

CHAPTER I.

That life is better Life, past fearing death,
Than that which lives to fear.

Beyond the infinite and boundless reach
Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,
Art thou damned. *Shakespeare.*

In that noble division of England known as Yorkshire are to be found at the present day many of the most famous names in the roll of the landed gentry of Britain; families whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror, whose descendants triumphed at Crecy and Agincourt, and whose representatives battled gallantly and died bravely in the civil conflicts of the "Roses"—aye, and in a hundred well-fought fields against foreign foes since then. Many of the noblest domains in the country are to be met with in the Ridiings; many a princely residence, with many a stately mansion and moated grange of the old time, are seated there; and not a few of the hereditary owners of the soil can show a prouder pedigree and a richer rent-roll than most of the mushroom dukes and princelings of the continent can boast.

Colonel Fontaine was descended from one of the oldest of these Yorkshire families. He married the heiress of General John Berkeley, and came into possession of a large estate lying in a lovely valley in South Wales. The mansion was an old-fashioned stone building, with towers at the angles, and commanded a view ranging over many miles of undulating country.

The house was built on an elevation several hundred feet above the level of the valley, but in its rear the hills arose on its northern side, protecting it in winter from the cold boreal blasts, while in summer the sweet south winds wafted their healthful and refreshing breezes over it.

The outbuildings were all of stone, and so substantially built as almost to defy the ravages of time. Venerable trees, that for ages had reared their proud heads over the solitary mountain side, cast their grateful shadows over the mansion and the sloping lawn in front of "Fountains," as the present owner had fancifully named it; yet the name was appropriate, for in the rear of the mansion a perennial cascade poured from the hill-side into a stone reservoir, which, with little labour, was converted into a sparkling fountain, that played without ceasing during the more genial seasons of the year.

In the valley beneath lay the rich lands, which yielded a bountiful harvest to the labours of the tenantry, whose cottages were scattered at intervals beneath the shade of the monarchs of the forest, in place of being crowded together upon a single spot, as is commonly the custom.

A contented community they were, for they were well housed, fed, and clothed. The Berkeleys had been indulgent landlords to them, and Colonel Fontaine endeavoured to tread in their footsteps in the management of the people for whose moral and physical welfare he felt himself responsible.

He had married late in life, and the fair girl who had preferred his mature elegance to the graces of the more youthful suitors who surrounded the orphan heiress, did not long remain with him. Three years of happiness were passed in the seclusion of their mountain home, and then its gentle mistress was laid in the vault of her ancestors, leaving her bereaved husband with two infant sons to solace him for her loss.

As time passed on, the boys grew in beauty and intelligence; but there was a marked difference in the appearance and character of the two brothers. Claude the elder, was brilliant, flighty, passionate, and reckless, though beneath this stormy surface lay great generosity of nature and warmth of heart. Colonel Fontaine recognized in his impulsive waywardness much of his own early nature, and he smiled at the boy's outbursts with the certainty that time, and the discipline of life, would correct these faults, and develop his eldest born into a noble and true man.

But proud and fond of Claude as he was, his heart clung with deeper tenderness to the fair-haired Henry, who so strongly reminded him of the wife he had lost; and he would sit for hours looking into the deep blue eyes of the child, almost fancying that the spirit of his departed Emily again spoke to him through their crystal depths. The boy had also inherited her quiet and passive temperament, united with a degree of firmness which at times amounted to obstinacy. In childhood Henry was delicate; but as he grew older, the masculine strength of mind and person, derived from his ancestry on both sides, proved him not inferior to his more robust brother.

Many families of wealth and culture resided in the vicinity of "Fountains," and the two brothers were familiarly thrown into a circle of young cousins, which gave them that ease and polish of manner which refined female society can alone impart to the rougher sex. The Fontaine mansion was often the scene of revelry, for after the first bitterness of his grief passed away, its master opened his doors to his hosts of friends, and entertained them with that old Yorkshire hospitality which has long passed into a proverb.

At the ages of seventeen and nineteen two handsome youths were not to be found than Claude and Henry Fontaine. A private tutor prepared them for college, and they were sent to Oxford.

At the university the career of the two brothers was distinguished; but, to the surprise of their friends, the brilliant and erratic Claude permitted the less gifted but more studious Henry to bear away the highest honours from his grasp. The brothers had always been strongly attached to each other, but the injudicious comments of friends, and the rivalry with which Claude was received on his return to his parental home by his young cousins, the children of "Tom Berkeley of the Vale," annoyed and irritated him, and laid the foundation of a feeling of jealousy which was yet to bear bitter fruit.

In his own youth, Colonel Fontaine had travelled much, and he considered the education of his sons incomplete till it had received this crowning polish. He had set aside a sum to be devoted to this purpose; and after graduating, Claude and Henry spent a few months at the old mansion before setting out upon their tour.

Claude was now in his twenty-third year, and his father considered him competent to take charge of his brother without the supervision of a tutor, so the two young men, amply provided with money, set out with light hearts and unbounded anticipations of enjoyment.

They crossed the channel and visited Paris. Time glided away almost imperceptibly in that gay and brilliant capital, and at length, with much reluctance, the two young men tore themselves away from its enchantments in time to reach Rome before the annual Easter celebration, which they were anxious to witness.

In the society in which they mingled, the feeling of jealousy to which I have referred was strengthened rather than diminished, for Claude found that the admiration which his dashing and genial manners attracted, was all he gained; while the quiet and refined Henry seemed to bear about him some potent spell which won upon the deeper affections of those with whom he was brought in contact. Claude saw that he had parasites, while Henry made friends; and he felt the distinction keenly, sometimes bitterly, yet in the depths of his heart he cherished a warm affection for the brother of whom he condescended to be jealous.

The young men reached Rome in time for the Miserere and the illumination of St. Peter's; the city was crowded with strangers, and no accommodation could be obtained at the hotels. In this dilemma the brothers were glad to obtain lodgings with a widow in humble circumstances who lived in the outskirts of the Eternal City. The family of Senora Savelli consisted of herself, a step-daughter of her late husband, and her own daughter, just budding into womanhood.

Savella Savelli was as lovely a type of young womanhood as was ever embodied in a human form, and her fascinations soon won the hearts of both the brothers, for by some fatality they always admired the same women, and it was the preference which they awarded to the younger which so deeply galled the vanity and pride of the elder.

Savella was by nature a coquette, and, young as

she was, she already had several lovers who watched her encouragement of the young Englishmen with jealous eyes; and, with the hot blood of their race, were ready to avenge the preference she might betray for either of them.

Colonel Fontaine heard from his sons on the eve of their departure for Rome, but months of weary watching passed away at the old mansion before further news from them came. He wrote to his friends in France, but no tidings arrived; and unable to bear the suspense longer, he made preparations for seeking them himself.

On the evening before his intended departure a letter bearing a foreign post-mark, the envelope bordered and sealed with black, was delivered to the colonel. With trembling hands he unclosed it, glanced over the fatal contents, and fell to the floor insensible.

He was restored to consciousness, but the shock had given him a mortal blow, and before the month was out, he was laid beside his wife in the family vault.

The letter which had produced this catastrophe was dated from Pisa, and contained these words, written by the faltering hand of Claude Fontaine:

"FATHER,—I hope that the external aspect of this letter will in some measure prepare you for its tragic contents. I cannot offer to console you, for I am myself plunged in the depths of anguish for the loss we have sustained. Henry is dead! slain by the hand of a jealous assassin! and I—I live to tell you this! I who should have guarded him from all harm even at the risk of my own life, for I know that he is the darling of your heart.

"I do not reproach you that you loved him best, for you gave to me also a full measure of affection, and I—oh, my father! I never knew how dear he was to me till I saw him lying in his blood before me.

"I will try and be calm enough to tell you of this terrible affair; that is, as much as I know myself, for many of the circumstances are clouded in painful mystery. When we arrived in Rome we found every public lodging so crowded with visitors that we were glad to take refuge in the cottage of a poor widow in the suburbs of the city. She had a young daughter of surpassing beauty, a light-hearted coquette who turned from the admirers of her own degree to listen to the impassioned flatteries of my poor brother, who soon became infatuated with her.

"We lingered in the city—I found interest among its ancient ruins and historical associations, while our unfortunate Henry gave himself up to the bewildering snares of this girl. A jealous lover watched him, surprised him with Savella leaning on his breast, and stabbed him mortally.

"I cannot dwell on what followed. It seems to me now a dream of agony too awful, too heart-rending to picture in words. I, that should have guarded him, that should have shielded him from every danger! I—

"Oh, God, pardon me! Oh, father, do not curse me, for I am wretched enough without that crowning despair.

"I left the city, left the unhappy girl who had caused this frightful catastrophe in a brain-fever, from which I do not know that she has recovered.

"I am now in Pisa; from there I shall go—I know not whither, for henceforth I am a wanderer upon the face of the earth.

"With this sin of carelessness upon my soul, I dare not face you again. It seems to me that Henry's blood cries aloud against me, and vainly I say to myself that I was not my brother's keeper. Alas! I feel that I was the elder—that I should have guarded him from all harm; but he is gone, and with him all the happiness of my life.

"My dear father, forgive me for deserting you; but I cannot come back to you with this burden upon me. I must seek forgetfulness in wandering from clime to clime till feeling has exhausted itself, and remorse has loosened its vulture-like hold upon my heart. Bear up against this blow if strength can be given you to do so; but you are old and feeble, and something tells me that you will soon join our lost one in heaven to which I believe he has gone. Henry was good and pure, and my only consolation is the hope that the All Merciful One has received him among his angels. Adieu my best loved father; yes—to God I commend you, for He alone can console and sustain you under this bitter blow.

CLAUDE FONTAINE.

When Colonel Fontaine fell from his seat after reading this strange letter, he held it so tensively grasped in his hand that it was impossible to loosen his hold upon it. So soon as consciousness returned, he folded and placed it in his breast, and throughout his last illness it never left him a single moment till the day before his death.

Then he summoned Reuben Giles, a faithful servant who had been with him from his youth, commanded him to close and lock the door of his chamber, and then bring him an iron box in which his private

papers were kept. At his command Giles propped him up with pillows, and placed a small desk with writing materials before him.

With a tremulous hand he wrote a few lines, and, enclosing the letter of Claude within them, sealed and directed the package to his son. Placing it in the box, he locked and sealed it, and, giving the key to Giles, commanded him to deliver it to no one but Claude Fontaine himself, should he ever return to his native land. If he did not, the box with its contents were to be burned.

A note to the same effect was written, to be placed in the hands of the next heir to the estate, should his son never return to claim it. Then a few lines were traced to the absent one:

"MY SON,—When this reaches you I shall be at rest. I write from my bed of death, and a few more hours must close the scene. Return to your home, Claude, so soon as your grief will permit you to do so; for you have many duties to perform here; you have many helpless dependents who will be left to the mercy of hirelings in your absence. God, the All Merciful, will, in his own good time, send comfort to you, and it is the dying prayer of your father's heart that He will do so.

"By all the noble-traits of your childhood and youth I judge you, son of my pride and hope; and I know you will faithfully perform the life-work allotted to you in this lower sphere. Only thus can you join those who have gone before you to the mansions of the just. That you may be accepted there is the one prayer of my broken heart; for oh! my son, my son! my heart yearns over you as did that of Abraham over Isaac when he laid him on the altar of sacrifice.

"I can say no more; my strength is exhausted, and my sands of life almost run out. Return to your home; here, if anywhere, you will find peace. Take my blessing, Claude; it is yours even if—Yet no—no—I cannot refer to that; it is too—too dreadful! Let repentance have its perfect work, and then come to me in the land to which I hasten.

"RALPH FONTAINE."

This was forwarded to his son, and the box replaced in a secret niche in a closet which had hitherto been known only to himself and his children. To the faithful Giles he knew he could confide this trust, and to him had its hiding-place been made known in this extremity.

The effort to accomplish this exhausted the little life that remained to Colonel Fontaine, and when the door was again unclosed to admit the friends who had gathered around him, he was lying almost senseless upon his pillow.

He breathed nearly twenty-four hours longer, but never spoke again, and, in a few more days, the kind master, the generous friend, was borne to his last resting-place amid weeping eyes and mournful hearts.

CHAPTER II.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most keenly feel thy pangs, Remorse!

Scott.

TEN years passed away before Claude Fontaine returned to his native land. The estate was placed under the care of an agent, with strict orders to maintain the same system of management which had prevailed under his father. Funds were transmitted to a commercial house in Paris for his use, together with an annual report drawn up by his cousin, Tom Berkeley of the Vale, as to the condition of his estate.

Brief replies came at long intervals, dated from Germany, Sweden, Norway, and lastly from Palestine. Like the Wandering Jew, Claude Fontaine seemed never at rest. By his orders, the house was kept in readiness for his reception at any hour, as he did not know at what moment the whim might seize him to return to his native land; and daily, for years, his old nurse, now promoted to the dignity of housekeeper, watched and waited for the return of her beloved young master.

Giles had been faithful to the trust reposed in him, and the key of the concealed box still remained in his possession, while he jealously guarded the secret of the spot in which it was placed.

One stormy night, when the wind wailed around the house, and the rain dashed at intervals against the windows, the old couple sat together in a room adjoining the kitchen, talking about their absent master, and speculating on the chances of his ever returning. A roaring fire burned in the chimney, for the night was cold, and a table set for two was drawn up in front of it.

After a long interval of silence, Giles said:
"Yes, Aggy, as you were saying, it's a long time since master Claude went to foreign parts, but something tells me that he'll be coming back soon. He might come to-night, for I've dreamed of him of late. Have you had a fire to-day in the old sitting-room?"

"You know well enough that I never forget that, for I'd not have my boy come back to a cold hearth-stone after being away from his home so long. Haven't I always kept a fire in that room in the winter, and flowers in the summer. Let Master Claude come when he will, he'll find that I haven't forgot him. It's curious, but I have dreamed of the boy, too; but he is no longer a boy; he's—let me see, he is thirty-three years old now, and never a mistress yet found for the old place."

"How do you know that? Master Claude may be married, for all we know, for he don't even tell Mr. Berkeley about his private affairs."

"There, don't be a fool, Giles. If my boy was married, don't you think he'd send word to his old nurse, that held him in her arms when he was a baby—that took his poor murdered brother from his dying mother, and kept them both as my own?"

Giles's face assumed an ashen hue, and he huskily said:

"Don't talk about him, Aggy; it makes the cold strike to my heart, for I've had some strange thoughts about that affair. But I ain't agoing to tell them to no mortal creature—no, not if they were to tear me to pieces with wild horses."

"Who's a going to ask you to tell your foolishness, you old blind mole," irascibly retorted Aggy. "If your thoughts go against one of the old blood, you'd better not speak them out where I can hear them, I can tell you. If you are my husband, you shan't talk evil of Miss Emily's child, when I'm near."

"As if I could, Aggy," he reproachfully said. "Isn't the honour of the family as dear to me as to you?"

At this, the old woman flared up more angrily than before.

"Who dares to talk of that, as if 'twas soiled? You talk as if you knew something against my blessed lad what's coming back some day to claim his own, and make the old house ring again as it used to in the old merry times. What unaccountable foolishness has got into your old pate now, Giles?"

"Why, what have I said that should put you in such a passion as that?"

Aggy was about to retort, when the grating of carriage wheels on the frozen ground without was heard. She suddenly clasped her hands, started forward, and exclaimed:

"He's come! I knew it; something tells me that my child is near me."

Giles snatched the lamp from the table, rushed from the room, crossed the wide, deserted-looking hall, and opened the front door, on which several loud and commanding raps had been struck.

Aggy closely followed him, and with wild eyes and half-open mouth, she stood regarding the form that appeared in the door-way; but for a few moments she doubted if this could be the long-expected lord of the manor.

A tall, stately man wrapped in a heavy furred cloak, with his cap drawn low over his forehead, held by the hand a child, whose fair, spiritual face peeped from beneath a crimson hood, but her figure was so bundled in furs, that it was impossible to form an idea of her size. With an expression of keen disappointment, Giles said:

"Walk in, sir; the family's not at home, but we have orders never to turn away travellers from the old house; though it ain't many that come to this out-of-the-way place."

A deep-toned voice, slightly trembling, replied:

"So—I have come back to my own, and they do not know me. Giles—nurse—it is I—your long-absent master."

With a cry of joy, his nurse lay at his feet, grasping his outstretched hand, and carrying it frantically to her heart and lips.

With voiceless emotion, Claude Fontaine raised the old woman, and gave a hand to each of the faithful pair. After a few moments devoted to the memories of the past, he turned to the door and gave directions to the postilion who had driven him to make himself and his horses comfortable for the night.

Giles went with the man to the stables, while Claude Fontaine closed the door, and walked forward to the old family sitting-room, clasping the hand of his little companion in his own. As he opened the door, he said:

"We shall find it cold in here, I suppose, but we can keep on our wrappings till a fire is made. Come, Isola, I will hold you in my arms till we see its cheerful blaze."

Aggy chuckled, and enjoyed the evident surprise of her master when he opened the door of the richly-carpeted and curtained room, and felt the genial warmth dung out by a large coal fire. She gleefully said:

"Haven't I been expecting you to come back all these years, and haven't I been determined not to be found wanting? The fire's been made every day when it was cold enough to need it, and now you've come, my poor old heart will burst with gladness!"

While she was speaking she lifted the shade from a

large centre table-lamp, and its brilliant glare illuminated every corner of the apartment.

Claude Fontaine glanced around, sighed heavily, and lifting the child placed her in a large, cushioned chair, which he drew in front of the fire.

Aggy threw on fresh firing, while her master strode up and down the floor, still wearing his travelling habiliments. When the fire blazed up cheerfully, the old woman turned to him, and respectfully said, though there was a trembling in her voice that touched the listener:

"Won't my boy show his old nurse the face she's pined to see for so many long years?"

Claude Fontaine paused in his rapid walk, and stood before her, while his hand lifted his cap, and he said, with mournful emphasis:

"You will be shocked, Aggy—in the worn and prematurely aged man before you, you will see few traces of the bright youth that left you in the hey-day of life and happiness."

With a sudden motion he threw aside his cloak, dashed his cap upon the floor, and drew up his tall form in the full glare of the light. The woman uttered a shrill cry, and threw up her hands as if to screen her eyes from contemplating the wreck of the noble youth she so well remembered.

His form was still strong and elastic, but upon the face the lines of suffering were deeply and indelibly traced; and the hair that fell over his massive brow was white as drifted snow. A blinding mist came over his eyes, and for a moment he could not steady his voice sufficiently to speak. At length, in deep, sombre tones, he said:

"I warned you, yet you are shocked. Can you see any trace of what I once was, nurse?"

"I see the stately form of the old master, as he was when he married my young mistress. I see the flashing eyes of the Fontaines, and I hear the voice that would awaken me out of the sleep of death, if it was sounded in my ears; but, oh! you are old before your time. In the prime of your days, you stand in the hall of your fathers with the snows of seventy winters upon your head. Oh, why is this, my boy—why is this?"

Claude Fontaine turned away with a choking sensation in his throat, and took several turns across the floor before he gained sufficient self-command to reply. At length he said, in husky tones:

"I have sinned, and I have suffered. I bear upon me the signs and tokens of the fiery furnace through which I have passed."

"The blessed Lord tries his own, and you are purified from the sin according to the promise," said the woman, devoutly.

He raised his clenched hands above his head, and cried out in tones that Aggy never forgot to her dying day.

"Blessed assurance! coming from lips that are true to me! If I could only believe it! If I could only find balm in Gilead for my wounded spirit, God knows that I would grovel in the dust before Him, and do such penance as was never known to the most ascetic anchorite. But it may not be—it may not be!"

In his passionate anguish he seemed to forget to whom he was speaking; the old woman drew near him, trembling, and touched his hand with her cold palm: in tremulous tones, she said:

"Though your sins be as scarlet—you know the rest, Master Claude."

"Yes, yes," he muttered, dropping his hands; "it was here my father promised he should meet me. Here I have come to seek him. It is my last hope—my last hope to save me from—"

He paused abruptly—wringing the hand that still rested on his arm, and turning to the child, spoke in a changed voice:

"My little girl has had nothing to eat since noon, and she must be almost perishing of hunger. Set before us what we have in the house, and see that the postilion who drove me hither is properly cared for."

Thus dismissed, the housekeeper left the room after one keen glance toward the child, who sat motionless upon the seat on which the master of the house had placed her; but when he drew near and looked down upon her, he saw that tears were slowly stealing over her face.

(To be continued.)

THE CHANNEL FLEET.—The following statement shows the number of ships, guns, men, horse-power, and tonnage of the ships of the Channel fleet, all of which, with the exception of the Prince Consort, are now anchored in the Downs, and the whole of which are ready to proceed to any part of the world within twenty-four hours. The Prince Consort is at present off Cowes, as guardship during her Majesty's stay at Osborne. This squadron consists of one screw ship, four iron screw ships, one iron-cased screw ship, one screw frigate, and one screw steam gunboat,

all of which are under the command of Rear Admiral Dacres, whose flag is in the Edgar. The ships are the Aurora, 35 guns, 615 men, 400 horses' power, 3,818 tons, Sir F. M. Clintock, commander; the Black Prince, of 41 guns, 704 men, 1,250 horses' power, 6,109 tons, J. F. B. Wainwright, commander; the Defence, 16 guns, 450 men, 600 horses' power, 3,720 tons, A. Phillimore, commander; the Edgar, 71 guns, 880 men, 600 horses' power, 3,094 tons, G. T. P. Hornby, commander; the Hector, 34 guns, 650 men, 800 horses' power, 4,089 tons, G. W. Preedy, C.B., commander; the Prince Consort, 35 guns, 660 men, 1,000 horses' power, 4,045 tons, G. O. Willes, C.B., commander; the Trinculo, 2 guns, 24 men, 60 horses' power, 235 tons, J. B. Creagh, commander; the Warrior, 40 guns, 660 men, 1,250 horses' power, 6,109 tons, Hon. A. Cochrane, commander. In accordance with a telegram received at Chatham from the Admiralty, a detachment of non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Marines Light Infantry left headquarters on Tuesday morning, for Deal, for the purpose of filling up vacancies on board the vessels comprising the Channel squadron. The Aurora has left the Downs, in order to see what the Austrians are about in the North sea, or elsewhere.

THE STORY OF A JUGGLER.

SOME of the French journals relate the following anecdote of the late Admiral Hamelin:

Hamelin, when a boy aged eleven, was serving on board the frigate Venus, of which his uncle was captain. While on a cruise in the Indian seas, the uncle and nephew were one day ashore together, when a celebrated native juggler went through his performance before them. Among other feats was that of cutting in two, with a sabre, a lemon placed on the hand of his confederate. The captain thought there must be some collusion between them, and asked for some one to hold out his hand while the feat was repeated. No one replied, with the exception of young Hamelin, who stepped forward and held out his right hand. The juggler, after examining it closely, declined to repeat the performance.

"You admit, then, that there was some trick in what you did?" said the captain.

"No," replied the juggler, "let me see the left hand."

He examined it and then said:

"If the boy will hold that hand still, I will do it."

"But why the left hand rather than the right?"

"Because the palm of the right hand is hollow, and there is danger of cutting the thumb."

The captain, in his turn, then hesitated, and wished to decline the trial. The boy, however, begged so earnestly that it should be repeated that the uncle at length consented. The lemon was placed on young Hamelin's hand; the juggler swayed backwards and forwards for a moment, and then, with a stroke swift as lightning, cleft the fruit in two parts. The boy had remained perfectly firm; he had, he afterwards stated, felt the blade of the sword as if a piece of cold iron wire were drawn across his hand.

TO THE MISER.

"'Tis a hard world to live in," growls the miser.

Unloved, uncared-for, and disagreeable man, why is it so? Because everybody is not like yourself, soulless, and ready to bend the knee and bow the head to your Mammon's god—gold. Because your whims are not promptly attended to, because all do not yield homage to you, ready at your command to assist in filling your already overflowing coffers. Because you find the thorn and thistle lining your life-path instead of the rose. Because you are not loved, after having made all to hate your grasping, greedy, sordid appetite for the filthy lucre. Can you, while living on, day after day, fearing and revering neither God nor man, though death may already have set his seal upon your brow, can you ask love or respect from those around you to whom you have given neither?

You're repulsed with harsh words all who ever made friendly advances, causing your name to be a by-word and reproach among your fellow citizens. You never yet gladdened one heart; you never shed happiness over one home-circle by a deed of kindness, and can you ask for affection? Your life has been a dead failure. If you ever had a heart you have pinched and so compressed it, confined it within such narrow limits, that its location, even its existence, is uncertain.

Men shun you; children hush their happy shouts and gay laughter at your approach, and cry, under their breath:

"There's old F—, the miser!"

All despise your mode of worrying through life. Your thoughts, however, run more on stocks, roads, banks, and the profit and loss you will experience if you invest than on friendship.

If a man, through mistake as to your identity, chances to bid you "Good morning," your reply is invariably:

"Morning's well enough; what per cent. are you paying now, sir?"

You contract a fatal disease, and are laid low upon a bed of death. Lower and lower you sink; you cannot throw off the invisible hand that holds you down as with an iron grasp; curses will not do it, threats will not do it, and persuasions will avail nothing. By degrees you realize your true condition. Alone and friendless, and the world to be the gainer rather than the loser by your death.

AN ENGLISH BIRD IN AUSTRALIA.

SOME years ago, when the Australian gold fever was hot in the veins of thousands, and fleets of ships were conveying them to that far-off, uncultivated world, a poor old woman landed with the great multitude of rough and reckless men, who were fired to almost frenzy by dreams of ponderous nuggets and golden fortunes.

For these they left behind them all the enjoyments, endearments, all the softening sanctities and surroundings of home and social life in England. For these they left mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. There they were, thinly tented in the rain, and the dew, and the mist, a busy, boisterous, womanless camp of diggers and grubbers, roughing-and-tumbling it in the scramble for gold mites, with no quiet Sabbath breaks, nor Sabbath songs, nor Sabbath bells to measure off and sweeten a season of rest.

Well, the poor widow, who had her cabin within a few miles of "the diggings," brought with her but few comforts from the old homeland—a few simple articles of furniture, the Bible and psalm-book of her youth, and an English lark to sing to her solitude the songs that had cheered her on the other side of the globe.

And the little thing did it with all the fervour of its first notes in the English sky. In her cottage window it sang to her hour by hour at her labour, with a voice never heard before on that wild continent. The strange birds of the land came circling around in their gorgeous plumage to hear it. Even four-footed animals, of grim countenance, paused to hear it.

Then, one by one, came other listeners. They came reverently, and their voices softened into silence as they listened. Hard-visaged men, bare-breasted and unshaven, came and stood gently as girls; and tears came out upon many a tanned and sun-blistered cheek as the little bird warbled forth the silvery treble of its song about the green hedges, the meadow streams, the cottage homes, and all the sunny memories of the fatherland. And they came near unto the lone widow with pebbles of gold in their hard and horny hands, and asked her to sell them the bird, that it might sing to them while they were bending to the pick and the spade.

She was poor, and the gold was heavy; yet she could not sell the warbling joy of her life. But she told them that they might come whenever they would to hear it sing. So, on Sabbath days, having no other preacher nor teacher, nor sanctuary privilege, they came down in large companies from their gold-pits, and listened to the devotional hymns of the lark, and became better and happier men for its music.—*A Walk from London to John O'Groat's. By Elisha Burritt.*

CALMNESS.—Be calm amid troubles. To jump and bounce because you are in hot water, is to be like a potato or a dumpling—more particularly a "small potato," or a dumpling that is half-baked. Yes. You will always note that the shallower a stream of water is, the more noise it makes. Therefore, don't lather yourself into a foam as you float along, or people will say you are shallow. Whoever did himself any good by fretting? The more you fret, the less you get. That's so.

THE PREMIER AND GARIBALDI.—There are some people who go so far as to declare that there is a letter in existence, and which will yet be produced, written by Lord Palmerston to Garibaldi while he was supposed to be at Caprera, and begging him to postpone his visit till the Conference was over. Garibaldi had left before the letter arrived, and hence, when it did come, it was determined to get him away as soon and as decently as possible.

DEATH OF MAJOR BRABAZON.—It is with extreme regret we have to announce the death of this gentleman, so well known for upwards of thirty years in betting circles as one of the heaviest speculators on the Derby and other great races. The melancholy event, which was not unexpected, took place on Tuesday last, at Brabazon Park, county Mayo, in Ireland, which the deceased purchased a few years back as a permanent residence. Major Brabazon was

formerly in the 15th Hussars, and was father of the Captain Brabazon so cruelly murdered in China a few years back. Uncertain as to his fate at first, Major Brabazon proceeded to China to try and discover if his son was alive, but unfortunately his efforts only too clearly confirmed the report of his untimely end. From that time he never looked up, and died in the sixty-fourth year of his age, of what may be really termed a broken heart. Major Brabazon possessed a very high sense of honour, and was held in the greatest estimation by all classes.

SCIENCE.

MR. BESSEMER, the inventor of the process of converting iron quickly into steel, can produce a block of it, twenty tons in weight, from flint cast iron, in twenty minutes!

A NEW "winkle" in the gas business is an attachment of a small marine clock to street-lamps, whereby the gas is turned off at precisely the moment desired. An arrangement of this kind has been applied to a lamp in Springfield, and so far it works to a charm, and only needs to light the lamps to be perfect.

IRON CEMENT.—To make an iron cement suitable for making rust joints, mix thoroughly 112 lbs. of clean cast-iron borings or turnings, with 8 ounces of sal-ammoniac, and 1 ounce of flour of sulphur, and add sufficient water. Keep wet when not to be immediately used, or it will heat and be spoiled.

CLEANNESS OF GUN-COTTON.—In their report to the Austrian Government, the Commission appointed to examine gun-cotton say: "From the steel barrel of a rifle, 40 rounds have been fired with gun-cotton cartridges, which have hit the target 300 yards distant, in an unexceptionable manner. After the said number of rounds, the barrel was internally as clean and polished as a mirror."

HOW TO CONSTRUCT AN UNFAILING DAM TO A RESERVOIR.

It has been suggested that failures in embankments of reservoirs are wholly attributable to the want of scientific and proper construction. Mr. Charles Johnson, of Liverpool, whose experience of reservoirs has been obtained in America, gives us a few suggestions upon this subject, which are deserving of careful attention.

It is well known, he says, that an arch, if it have an unfailling base, is the strongest construction known to mechanical science. This arch, when laid horizontally, that is, sprung up-stream from its buttments, is equally effectual to resist a flood of water as the arch of a bridge is to sustain a superincumbent weight. The following are his directions for construction:

Select the driest season in the year, when the streams are low. If you have rocky banks to the stream you intend to obstruct, penetrate into the rock a sufficient depth to obtain a permanent and immovable base or buttment to your arch.

If the banks are of earth, excavate deeply and lay the foundation of the buttments with huge stones below the action of the stream, and so far into the bank that no flood can disturb them. Spring your wall, eight or ten feet in thickness, perpendicular on the down-stream side to the height you intend to raise the pond, and on a curvature, bending up-stream, so as to form a stony arc or elliptic circle.

Of course, you will allow the waters to flow unobstructed in the deepest channel of the stream while your arch is in building.

The stones composing the arch should be very large, and cut bevelled, conformable to the elliptic. The up-stream end of the stones may be left undressed—no matter how rude and jagged. No mortar is to be used in laying the wall, unless you have the best of water-lime.

On the up-stream side of your arched wall you are to accumulate rubble stones or gravel, so as to form an embankment of a gentle inclined plain from the top of the wall to the feet of the up-stream line of the dam. This dam may be 60 feet in thickness at base, more or less, according to the height of the wall.

Let the last layer but one of this inclined plane be a foot in thickness of pure gravel, and the coating above this gravel six inches in thickness, of water-lime, siliceous clay, or, in the absence of this, of good blue clay. This should be laid on in mortar form, and the puddling should be very thick at the foot of the inclined plane.

In the absence of a rocky bottom, the earth should be excavated for the whole base of the embankment down to the rock, gravel, or other hard substance, so that the material beneath the embankment shall be impenetrable and indissoluble by water.

This is very important; else, if the embankment be reared on soil or spongy earth, the water will undermine the work and destroy it.

The inclined plane from the top of the wall to its up-stream verge should never be more abrupt from a

horizontal than 22½ deg., so that the pressure of the water will be rather downward than lateral. In observing this, a flood rushing down-stream like the waves of the sea, lashed into fury by the storm, will spend its force gradually and innocuously in climbing the plane.

Weirs should be provided to every dam to carry off the surplus water; they are like safety valves to a steam-engine.

AIR AND OCEAN.—The air is made up of a mixture of two gases, oxygen and nitrogen, and it always contains considerable watery vapour and carbonic acid. In his new work on chemistry, Prof. Youmans states that if all the air were reduced to its average density at the earth's surface, it would extend about five miles high, and that if the above constituents were arranged in layers one over the other, we should have first, at the bottom, a bed of water all over the earth's surface 5 inches deep; next a layer of carbonic acid 13 feet deep; next above, a layer of oxygen gas about 1 mile deep, and above this a layer of nitrogen gas about 4 miles deep. This will help the memory. Sea water contains about 4 ounces of salt in every gallon. Estimating the ocean to average two miles in depth, the salt, if separated in a solid bed, would line the bottom of the entire ocean to a depth of 140 feet.

INDURATION OF IRON.

THE ironwork of the new bridge at Blackfriars is to be indurated by a process patented by Messrs. Morewood and Co., and is alike important from the great cost which will be incurred, and the testing of a rather abstruse chemical formula for the preservation of iron from oxidation and decay. The process is as follows:

The iron is to be thoroughly cleaned and heated to the requisite temperature, in a furnace planned by the inventors. When this temperature is attained, it is to be plunged into a bath of prussiate of potash, and chloride of potassium, in a molten state, so that when the iron is withdrawn, it may easily part with the surplus of the aforesaid chemicals, which should run off like oil.

The iron is then to be dipped into boiling water, containing a certain proportion of cyanide of potassium; from thence it is removed to a bath for a final washing, and set up on end to dry. All the processes are to be carried on under cover, and before exposure to the atmosphere the iron is to be coated with an asphaltum paint twice, at given intervals; and again it is to receive two coats after fixing. Of course, all the necessary planing, drilling, and fitting is to be done preparatory to the indurating.

The time the iron is to remain in the bath will vary from one to five minutes, according to the weight of the metal to be operated upon.

The elaborate character of the process, to which the contractor is rigidly bound, will account for the large sum to be expended in carrying out this part of the work. £4 per ton is allowed to the contractor for the induration and painting. Messrs. Morewood will receive from the contractors 5s. per ton as their royalty, which it is estimated will be £1,000.

Thus, £16,000 is to be spent in this effort to prevent oxidation, no greater proof of the damaging results of which can be offered, than the case of the cleaning of the oxide (or rust) from the Menai Bridge, from which has lately been removed above forty tons of oxide of iron.

THE MEASURE OF AN INCH OF RAIN.—The Atlantic includes an area of twenty-five millions of square miles. Suppose an inch of rain to fall only upon one-fifth of this vast expanse. It would weigh three hundred and sixty thousand millions of tons; and the salt which, as water, it held in solution in the sea, and which, when that water was taken up as a vapour, was left behind to disturb equilibrium, weighed sixteen millions more tons, or nearly twice as much as all the ships in the world could carry at a cargo each. It might fall in a day; but occupy what time it may in falling, this rain is calculated to exert so much force—which is inconceivably great—in disturbing the equilibrium of the ocean. If all the rain during the year were taken up in one mighty measure, and cast into the ocean at one effort, it would not make a greater disturbance in the equilibrium of the sea than would the fall of rain supposed. And yet, so gentle are the operations of nature, that movements so vast are unperceived.

MAKING SUPERPHOSPHATE.—Throw the bones into a hoghead sunk one-half its depth in the ground (or, what is much more convenient, into a tight strong trough, somewhat similar to those formerly used for holding pomace when making cider), pour over them ten gallons of water, then empty one carboy Chamber's best sulphuric acid; and in that proportion increase until the bones are all covered. As they dissolve and sink down, add more bones, until the whole becomes a thick pasty mass, which it will in the course of two or three weeks. Care must be taken to keep it covered tightly, and avoid letting the acid touch any part of

the clothing, as it will certainly leave its mark. When wanted for use, have ready alongside of the tub a bed of fine mould or dry plaster, into which shovel or ladle the mass, turn over and mix until sufficiently dry to handle pleasantly. The result, from applications of phosphate so manufactured, has always been highly satisfactory; one application to a field of rye was remarkable in its effects. I have sometimes broken or chopped the bones up with an old axe or hatchet.

SOURCE OF THE NILE.

I BELIEVE that in England some of those interested in forgotten lore are rummaging out old maps to find lakes at the source of the Nile. I do not know whether your readers are yet aware how near the Portuguese came to the truth as to the origin of that celebrated river. Mafféus, in his 'Historia Judica,' Lib. 1, says:

"There is a lake like a sea in the interior of Ethiopia (Congo), which is said to be a hundred leagues in length; from it arise three of the most noble rivers of all Africa: the Nile (whose origin has been sought with so much care by antiquity) flowing into the Mediterranean, the Cuama and the Zaire flowing into the ocean. In this lake there are several islands, some of them of such great size that they send out thirty thousand men to war."

There is a globe in the Museum Calvet, at Avignon, which apparently dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century. On it two enormous lakes are represented; the first of these, whose middle is crossed by the 10th degree of latitude south of the Equator, and which lies in the 48th and 49th degrees of longitude, is marked Zaire or Zembre.

There is another smaller lake to the east, which has its southern extremity touched by the same degree of latitude as the first, and is in the 57th degree of longitude. It is named Zafan, and stands on the map almost opposite Quila. Each of these lakes sends a branch to the Nile; the two unite a little to the north of the Equator.

There is another lake, marked Lacus Niger, probably Lake Tchad. M. Miani has seen and examined this interesting old globe.

Jerome Lobo gives a curious account of the sources of the Nile, which, however, appears to be the Bahe-el-Azrek. He winds up with the sagacious remark:

"I cannot refrain from remarking on the little success of those whom Caesar and Alexander sent to discover the sources of the Nile. They were no doubt stopped by the difficulty of passing through so many different people, or by that of passing the cataract, whilst, if they had begun from the coast of the Red Sea, they might have completed this famous design, and satisfied the curiosity of their princes, for there are ports upon this sea whence one could reach the sources of the Nile in two months." See Relation du P. Jeronimo Lobo, in "Relations de divers Voyages curieux," 4me partie, Paris, 1666. Lobo travelled in 1629.

I am far from thinking that this will in any way diminish the just glory of Captains Speke and Grant, any more than that Lord Palmerston has a right to deny the gratitude of our government to their services, because he has neglected Dr. Livingstone or Count Strelecki.

W. W. IRELAND.

THE KING OF ITALY and the GARIBALDIAN RECEPTION.—It is stated that Victor Emmanuel was much displeased at the reception given to Garibaldi by distinguished personages in England, and gave orders to his representative in this country not to visit the houses of the aristocracy who had received Garibaldi. But as this would have excluded him from the *crème de la crème* of fashionable life, and from social intercourse with the heads of Government, his excellency remonstrated, and his remonstrances, happily for English society, were of avail.

GARIBALDI and THE SERVANTS at STAFFORD HOUSE.—On the morning he left Stafford House, General Garibaldi put £20 in the hands of a friend, and asked him to distribute it amongst the servants, with an expression of his hearty thanks for their attention. One of the upper servants was communicated with, who, after speaking of it to his fellows, came back into the room, and, with real emotion, informed the general's friend that not a servant in the establishment would take a shilling. They one and all esteemed it an honour they should never forget to serve such an illustrious man, and they must entreat him to let the honour be their reward.

HEART-KINDNESS.—That quality which is called "heart-kindness" is the result, not of natural disposition, but of the uprooting of self, and planting therein the love of our neighbour; it is the spirit which wins its way in life, which tinctures all our actions with good will, and which makes the happiness of all around us. An unselfish spirit is essentially a loving one. "How is it that you live so happily with your husband, who is so exacting?" was asked of a lady,

whose smiling face and sunny temper made her widely beloved. "Because I have never yet found anything worth contending for," she replied. "And," said her friend, "do you always give up your will to your husband's?" "Certainly not, where principle is concerned," said the lady; "but if it be on indifferent matters, what does it signify?"

BLACKING.—Blacking is first mentioned in the 16th century. We then hear of a "pair of pumps, with a cross cut at the toes for corns; not new, indeed, but cleanly blakt with soot, and shining like a shoeing horn." Blacking was brought from Italy; for it is said that the shoes of the Neapolitan factors in the Exchange in London shone with blacking.

FACETIÆ.

WHAT do we seek redress for? Injuries. Where do we find it? In juries.

WHY is John Bigger's boy larger than his father? Because he is a little Bigger.

HOOD says that he could write as well as Shakespeare, if he had a mind to; but the trouble was, he had not got the mind.

"FATHER," said a little boy, "I know how to fire off the guns and cannons of earth, but who is tall enough to touch off the thunder?"

THE French papers, in alluding to the recent collection of insects by the English British Museum, call our national building the finest establishment of a scientific nature in the world except the "Morgue."

A YOUNG man advertises in a Jersey paper for a situation as son-in-law in a respectable family. Would have no objection, he says, to go a short distance into the country.

HANDEL used to console his friends when, previous to the curtain being drawn up, they lamented that the house was so empty, by saying, "Nevare moind, de music vill sound de potter."

A MAN being asked by a young lady what phonography was, he cut his pencil and wrote the following, telling her that was phonography: "U. R. A. B. U. T. L. N.!" (You are a beauty, Ellen.)

"MOTHER," said Ike Partington, "did you know that the 'iron horse' has but one ear?" "One ear! merciful gracious child, what do you mean?" "Why the engine-ear, of course."

A PLAIN SALAD.—The Southerners at the commencement of the war being asked what they wanted, replied, "lettuce alone;" and the Northerners have, out of sheer perversity, been trying ever since to give them a dressing.

A LADY once asked a gentleman what wit was like? To which he replied, "Like your ladyship's bottle of *sau volatile*—poignant at the first opening, but, on being too much handed about, loses all its flavour, and becomes insipid."

It is said that a convict was lately tracked into the service of a young married couple, where he was officiating as a very pretty lady's-maid, and had been doing all the duties of his *role* for three months. The horror of the young married lady, and still more of the husband, may be imagined when the police said, "That young woman is the man we want."

A CUTE LAWYER.—A gentleman dying left all his estate to a monastery, on condition that on the return of his only son, who was then abroad, the worthy fathers should give him "whatever they should choose." When the son came home he went to the monastery, and received but a small share, the monks choosing to keep the greater part for themselves. A barrister to whom he applied to mention the case, advised him to sue the monastery, and promised to gain his cause. The gentleman followed his advice. "The testator," said the ingenious barrister, "has left his son that share of the estate which the monks should choose; these are the express words of his will. Now it is plain what part they have chosen, by what they keep for themselves. My client then stands upon the words of the will. 'Let me have,' says he, 'that part they have chosen, and I am satisfied,' and he gained the suit.

GALLANT DEFEAT OF PRIZEFIGHTERS.—A few mornings ago, as Mr. Pattison, of Norwood, near Gateshead, and his family, were seated at breakfast, they were disturbed by a great uproar close by, and on going out to ascertain the cause of the commotion, they found that it proceeded from an immense mob of ruffians, assembled in one of his fields, who were engaged in witnessing a prize-fight. Mr. Pattison at once proceeded to the scene of action, and requested them to leave, but no remonstrance on his part could induce them to do so. He then returned to his residence, and ordered three of his men to mount their horses; and himself and two sons having done like-

wise, they took the precaution of arming themselves with stout cart-whips, and boldly galloped down amongst the mob, making good use of their weapons. After galloping through them, they wheeled and charged again and again, till the enemy was fairly defeated, and regularly skedaddled, with as much precipitation as ever the Federals displayed in their ever memorable flight from "Bull's Run," leaving the gallant little party of six fairly masters of the field.

SUMMARY OF WEDDED BLESS.

God bless the wives,
They fill our hives
With little bees and honey!
They ease life's shocks,
They mend our socks,
But—don't they spend the money?

AN Irish baronet has hit upon a clever idea for the prevention of agrarian outrage. His bailiff was threatened, whereupon he informed the tenant that in the event of the bailiff being killed he should raise their rents by the amount of a life-annuity to his widow. This is nearly as good as the device of another landlord, who threatened with death for claiming some rent, called his tenants together and read out his will, leaving the entire property to a Scotchman. He understood his countryman, and is alive yet.

THE LAST RESORT.

When Whitefield preached before the seamen, he used the following bold apostrophe:

"Well, my boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway over a smooth sea, before a light breeze, and we shall soon lose sight of land. But what means this sudden lowering of the heavens and that dark cloud arising from beneath the western horizon? Hark! don't you hear distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning? A storm is gathering! Every man to his duty! How the waves rise and dash against the ship! The air is dark! The tempest rages! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beam-ends! What next?"

The unsuspecting tars suddenly rose and exclaimed:

"Take to the long-boats!"

HOW HE GOT THE APPLE.—When the Hon. William —, now M.P., was a boy at school, his bench was shared by an urchin named Mugs. The teacher had instituted a rule that any scholar seen eating during school hours should come on to the floor and finish eating what he had begun, to the merriment of his fellow pupils. One day Bill brought a large apple from home, and laid it on his desk; and so tempting was the fruit to Mugs that, in consideration of his best slate-pencil, Bill promised him a "taste" when it should be eaten at recess. Not many minutes after this Bill's attention was called another way, and Mugs, watching the opportunity, took the apple and purposely commenced munching it, directly before the eyes of the teacher. "The young man who is eating an apple come on to the floor and finish it," said the teacher. Mugs obeyed with well-feigned reluctance, blinking at Bill under the arm that shaded his roguish eyes, while Bill shook his fist and vowed vengeance the very first recess.

PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.—What's done can't be helped. Perfectly untrue when applied to a leg of mutton.—*Punch.*

ACCIDENT IN THE MONEY MARKET.—The funds always fall when there appears to be any probability of war. No bones are broken by a fall in the funds, which may portend, but cannot occasion, broken bones.—*Punch.*

A TABLE D'HÔTE AT PARIS.

Attentive Swell (to elegant and fascinating American young lady, who has been monopolizing the adjacent gentlemen all through dinner): "Let me give you some of this" (handing article of dessert.)

Belle Américaine: "No, thanks! Well, then, a very little, for I guess I'm pretty crowded now."
[Horror of Swells; triumph of Female British Contingent.—*Punch.*

"IN VINO VERITAS."—Customer: "Please, sir, I want a bottle of shillin' port." Tradesman: "My dear, we have nothing in ports as low as a shilling; but—we've some delicious damson at 15d., and it's much the same thing."—*Punch.*

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.—When the inspector confiscates the scales of an unjust trader, what is the necessary consequence of the act to the latter? He is compelled to see the error of his weights!—*Fun.*

A NIGGER NUT TO CRACK.—Lookes yar you, Massa Bones, can yer gib dis child an answer to dis 'riginal conundrum:—Why am Massa Chase's "greenbacks" like de shoes wid pasteboard soles which Massa Lincoln's clothers hab bin making for his troops? Elg, Sar? Yah! Yah! Yah! yah! yah! yah! yah! Well den, Sar, it's cause dey both am papery-shoes. Yah! Yah! don't you see

him? Well den, Sar, you see dey both am papery-shoes. Yah! Yah! Had yer dat time, Nigger!—*Punch.*

SEASIDE AMUSEMENT.

Fred.: "Well, Charlie, what did you do with yourself yesterday?"

Charlie (dreamily): "Well, in the morning I smoked; then I read the paper and smoked again; and after dinner—let me see—oh, I smoked all the evening."—*Fun.*

THE MEDICIN MAIGRE LUL.—Poor Garibaldi has been compelled to doctor himself. The Sangrados ordered him English air, and then countermanded the delicacy—perhaps because the general was served with a dish of popular enthusiasm that was fit to be set before a king. If four-and-twenty blackbirds were not baked in the interdicted viand, "three black crows" have come out of it over and over again. But in spite of the many ridiculous rumours, it is quite plain that the general's departure was dictated out of regard for a constitution—but it wasn't the general's constitution.—*Fun.*

HIBERNIAN.

Paddy: "Could your honour direct me to the Circus?"

Swell: "This is the Regent's Circus."

Paddy: "Is it? Bedad, then, it's the queerest Circus that I have ever seen. Where's the horses?"—*Fun.*

OH! (GLAS) GO-RACIOUS!—Nicholas, who is subject at times to Fitz-roy, of course) says that he hopes about the Derby Day to see the Glass-go up.—*Comic News.*

THE CLUB TOOTHPICK; OR, TOO AWFUL TO BE TRUE.

Scene.—An inn in some remote clime—say Scotland. Enter, to refreshed but irritable tourist, a waiter bearing a toothpick.

Irritable T.: What a time you've been getting it. Waiter (apologetically): Eh, weel, sir, but you dinna ken that the club can but ill spare it just now; but if ye'll make a muckle haste, you may just have it for four minutes—but you muns keep the club waiting langer, for—

(Shrieking wildly, irritable tourist flies anywhere—anywhere out of that inn).—*Comic News.*

A RICH IDEA.—Which of Moore's melodies resembles the lace that conceals the bridal blushes of a wealthy heiress?—The veil of Have-ochre.—*Comic News.*

THE MOST RECENT GEOGRAPHICAL CHANGE.—Disappearance of the Bay of Tunis.—*Comic News.*

FASHIONABLE INTELLIGENCE.—A lady informs us that the new style of wearing coats with long tails is found rather inconvenient, for the tails are apt to get shut indoors. Well, we should consider that a drawback.—*Comic News.*

NOT SO BEY'D.—There is a rumour afloat of a serious disturbance in Tunis, which has resulted in the death of the Bey. If this be true, the succession of course remains in a-Bey-hence. When harmony is restored, we shall perhaps learn what the Tune-is, and then will declare the next air to the throne.—*Comic News.*

BARLEY CIVIL.—When Gladstone bowed over his opponents on the malt question, Pam, meeting one of the defeated in the lobby, said, "Never mind, you fought so courageously, that I shall recommend you to her Majesty for decoration." On the worsted M.P.'s enquiring the premier's meaning, he was told, in the language of the P.R., that what he had obtained was the Malt-case "Cross." Which he was.—*Comic News.*

A FEW OBSERVATIONS.—As fires are just going out we feel it a grate duty to teach people how to keep them in. In the first place, you should never use the ash tree for fuel—Gray should have known better than to say—

"Even in our ashes dwell our wanted fires." If a fire is not lighted it is no good making a stir. The poets often speak of "the dancing firelight"—we believe the most popular dance of the great is the "Poker." Next to that is the "Sottish" which is due to the hob—and nob. "Deux Tonges" are also fashionable. If you are too economical in your supply of fuel you can hardly expect a grate-full warmth.—*Comic News.*

THE MERSEY RAMS.—Ismail Pacha has declined to be examined by the commission sent out to Egypt by the Government in re the Mersey rams.

THE GREAT EASTERN.—It seems really true, after all, that the French Government have bought the Great Eastern, but she will first fulfil her contract in laying the Atlantic cable.

PRINCE FREDERICK OF DENMARK.—Nothing has of late been heard of the uncle of King of Greece, Prince Frederick of Denmark, who left Copenhagen suddenly

during the early part of the war. It appears, however, that he has been residing with the King of Greece in the strictest incognito, and will shortly visit Germany.

A TIMELY PRESENT.—An anatomical mechanic in London has constructed and presented to Garibaldi a most ingenious apparatus, by which the pain of the general's wounded ankle has been greatly relieved. It certainly came at the right moment to facilitate the general in making a speedy exit.

BETIREMENT.

THERE is in the history of most of our lives some particular period to which we delight to recur more often than to others, and in which we think our happiest moments were spent. To some, this period may have occurred when in the prime of life; and to others, when in the decline of years; but, in general, we find it placed among our youthful days. And though we may have cause to place it in later times, yet we cannot revert to the scenes and events of early life but with much pleasure and satisfaction.

If we look into the nature of the pursuits and pleasures of our youth, the remembrance of which now spreads such charms over those times, we shall find it to be, in most instances, the enjoyment of a peaceful seclusion from the cares, and bustle, and noise of the world. Many of the hours to which we look back with the most pleasure, now that they are gone, are those in which we have pursued, with a friend, an afternoon's ramble through the woods, an evening's walk on the beach, or a morning's ride through the town.

These are simple enjoyments in the estimation of the fashionable world, but they are the most rational, as they leave no sting behind that will pierce us when living, or torment us when we come to die.

They are to be prized on another account. Friendship, though often formed in the closet, is nourished and strengthened in the field. It finds a safe retreat in the bosoms of those who love to admire in company the glowing scenes of nature. Enwrapped in the contemplation of the inspiring objects that lie before them, and enkindled with a holy enthusiasm in the love of nature's charms, they are apt to impute much of the pleasure they derive from these sources solely to the circumstance of their enjoying the presence and conversation of each other.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

DYE FOR FELT HATS.—Take a quarter of a pound of logwood chips, and one pint of rain-water; simmer down to half the quantity; take a new clean paint-brush and brush the liquor boiling hot over the hat; hang out in the air to dry, and the colour will be restored equal to new, and may be done as often as you please.

SMELL OF PAINT.—The best way to get rid of the smell of paint in a newly-painted room, is to place a vessel full of lighted charcoal in the middle, and throw on it two or three handfuls of juniper berries. Shut the windows, the chimney, and the door close (no one must, of course, remain in the room). In twenty-four hours the room may be opened, when it will be found that the sickly, unwholesome smell will be entirely gone.

STATISTICS.

A PARLIAMENTARY return shows that the Income Tax paid in Great Britain in the last five years has averaged annually 7s. 11½d. per head of the estimated population, and in Ireland 2s. 4½d. In 1863 the amount was 8s. 6½d. per head in Great Britain, and 2s. 5½d. in Ireland.

FRENCH COAL MINES.—The committee composed of the owners of French coal mines have just published some interesting statistics, from which it appears that in the year 1853 the French coal mines produced 5,000,000 tons, of the value of 59,654,903 francs. In the year 1863 the produce rose to 10,000,000 tons, of the value of 117,500,000 francs, which is only a little more than one-eighth of the produce of the English coal mines. It is said, nevertheless, that the stock of coals in the stores in France is exhausted in consequence of the severe winter, and that it will be necessary to look to foreign countries for a fresh supply.

THE MILITIA.—According to a Parliamentary return issued about a fortnight since, it appears that the militia establishment in England and Wales for the year 1863 consisted of 3,053 officers, 3,324 non-commissioned officers, and 83,460 privates. Of these there were absent at training on the day of inspection 288 officers with leave, and 21 without; 16 non-commissioned officers with leave, and 7 without; 1,436 privates with leave, and 4,950 without. The establishment in Scotland consisted of 432 officers, 441 non-commissioned officers, and 10,452 privates. There were absent from training on the day of inspection, with leave, 37 officers, 1 non-commissioned officer, and 117 privates, without leave, 5 officers, 3 non-commissioned officers, and 571 privates. The establishment in Ireland numbers 1,201 officers, 1,262 non-commissioned officers, and 30,710 men. There were absent on inspection-day, 27 officers without leave, and 135 with leave, 5 non-commissioned officers without leave, and 3 with leave, 2,164 privates without leave, and 291 with leave. There are wanting to complete the establishment in the United Kingdom, 1,652 officers, 528 non-commissioned officers, and 19,691 privates.

SYMPATHY.

SWEET and ever fragrant flower,
Glowing in the feeling heart;
Bursting forth in sorrow's hour,
Shedding balm for sorrow's smart;
Never leave my heart, oh, never!
I will hold thee as my friend;
Time and change fond ties may sever,
Hope's thy motto to the end.

In my heart thy growth I'll nurture,
Weary hours thy sweets beguile;
Pointing forth a brighter future
For each sorrow-stricken child.
Firm I'll plant thee in my bosom,
Usher forth at sorrow's call;
Ever fragrant are thy blossoms,
Yielding sweets for one and all.

E. T. L.

GEMS.

MOST of the shadows that cross our path through life are caused by standing in our own light.

Few secrets would ever escape if the following rule were complied with: Never confide in the young; new pals leak. Never tell your secrets to the aged; old doors seldom shut closely.

WHEN we are affronted it is better to pass it by in silence, or with a jest, though with some dishonour, than endeavour to revenge. If we can keep reason above passion, that and watchfulness will be our best defendant.

NEITHER in little things nor in great ones suffer your dread of singularity to turn you from the path of integrity. Arm yourselves with this mind to do what is right, though you can find no companions or followers.

FUN should be cultivated as a fine art, for it is altogether a fine thing. Who ever knew a funny man to be a bad one? On the contrary, is he not, nine times out of ten, generous, humane, social, and good? To be sure he is. Fun—it is a great thing. It smooths the rough places of life; makes the disposition fresh and rosy as a maiden's kiss; scatters sunshine and flowers wherever it goes; gives the world a round, jolly countenance; makes all the girls as pretty as June roses, and making one of the best families out. We go in for fun. The man who won't cultivate it must keep a good half rod between us.

WEAR A SMILE.—You can, if you will, live among beautiful flowers and singing birds, or in the mire, surrounded by fogs and frogs. The amount of happiness which you can produce is incalculable if you will show a smiling face, a kind heart, and speak pleasant words. On the other hand, by sour looks, cross words, and a fretful disposition, you can make hundreds unhappy almost beyond endurance. What will you do? Wear a pleasant countenance, let joy beam in your eye, and love on your forehead. There is no joy so great as that which springs from a kind act or a pleasant deed, and you may feel it at night when you rest, and at morning when you rise, and through the day when about your daily business.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Emperor Napoleon is having a magnificent yacht built as a present for the Emperor and Empress of Mexico.

THE working men of Liverpool propose to give Garibaldi a yacht, and £250 has already been subscribed for the purpose.

If half a flock of sheep is provided with bells of different tones, dogs will not attack them, as the noise will alarm them.

DR. LIVINGSTONE.—Dr. Livingstone, according to letters from Zambesi, is in good health. It is likely that he will soon return to England.

INCONSIDERATE REQUESTS.—Garibaldi had 267,000 applications for locks of hair from ladies. The calculation is that, after the complete cropping and exhaustion of the hero's own hair, including whiskers and beard, a hundred and twenty-three wigs would not have met the demand.

A BOURBON conspiracy has been detected at Naples. No less than twenty different alphabets in cipher have been found.

THE story of the Prince of Wales's visit to Paris is revived. Apartments are to be prepared for him. Fontainebleau is to be placed at his disposal.

INTERTEMPERANCE.—Whenever the wandering demon of drunkenness finds a ship adrift, he steps on board, takes the helm, and steers straight for the millstream.

A COSTLY VEIL.—At a wedding in Paris last week, Mlle. Percire, the bride, wore a lace veil worth £4,000.

FLORIDA CATTLE.—The cattle of Florida are exceedingly small and poor. It is estimated that there are two millions in the state, their average weight being less than four hundred pounds.

SINGING MICE.—The soft twitter of the singing mouse has been found by anatomists to be the result of a disease of the lungs, which, impeding the proper passage of the air through the cells, causes at times the peculiar warbling sound alluded to.

THE NEW ATLANTIC CABLE.—The manufacture of the new Atlantic telegraph cable is being proceeded with so rapidly that it is estimated that it will be ready for laying by the end of June or the beginning of July, the Great Eastern being chartered for that purpose.

It is stated—and apparently on very good authority—that a range of six hundred yards has been obtained with an arrow, and that to hit, five times out of six, a mark six inches in diameter, and distant one hundred yards, was not an unusual performance in old times for a first-class archer.

THE copyright of the whole of Washington Irving's works has realized the sum of £42,000. Of this vast amount—vast for literary labour—£30,000 was paid during the author's lifetime; the remaining £12,000 has just been paid over to his trustees. Sunny Hill, his famous estate, is to be held during life by his nearest relative; and in after times relatives bearing the name of Irving as a surname to be preferred, in order to perpetuate the memory of Washington Irving.

FOOTPATHS.

THE next morning, after breakfast, my kind host set me on the way by a footpath, through alternating fields of wheat, barley, oats, beans, and turnips, into which an English farm is generally divided.

These footpaths are among the vested interests of the walking public throughout the United Kingdom. Most of them are centuries old. The footsteps of a dozen generations have given them the force and sanctity of a popular right. A farmer might as well undertake to barricade the turnpike-road as to close one of these old paths across his best fields.

So far from obstructing them, he finds it good policy to straighten and round them up, and supply them with convenient gates or stiles, so that no one shall have an excuse for tramping on his crops, or for diverging into the open field for a shorter cut to the main road.

Blessings on the men who invented them! It was done when land was cheap, and public roads were few; before four wheels were first geared together for business or pleasure.

They were the doing of another age; this would not have produced them. They run through all the prose, poetry, and romance of the rural life of England, permeating the history of green hedges, thatched cottages, morning songs of the lark, moonlight walks, meetings at the stile, harvest homes of long ago, and many a romantic narrative of human experience widely read in both hemispheres.

They will run for ever, carrying with them the same associations. They are the inheritance of landless millions, who have trodden them in ages past at dawn, noon, and night, to and from their labour; and in ages to come the mowers and reapers shall tread them to the morning music of the lark, and through spring, summer, autumn, and winter, they shall show the fresh chequer-work of the ploughman's ho-nalised shoe.

The surreptitious innovations of utilitarian science shall not poach upon these sacred preserves of the people, whatever revolutions they may produce in the machinery and speed of turnpike locomotion. These pleasant and peaceful paths through park and pasture, meandering through the beautiful and sweet-breathing aridry of English agriculture, are guaranteed to future generations by an authority which no legislation can annul.—A Walk from London to John O'Groats. By Elihu Burritt.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALICE V.—We must decline to advise in such a case.

P. T. A.—Russian leather is perfumed with the tar of the birch-tree, and never suffers from damp.

X. Y. Z.—We may at some future time entertain your suggestion.

PHILIP Y.—We decline to answer such questions as yours—you should write to the secretary.

TEMPO.—You must write to the Adjutant-General, at the Horse Guards.

EMILY CLARE.—Yes; if the eyes were expressive, such a person might be considered good-looking.

FAIR PLAY.—The population of Prussia is about 16,400,000, that of Austria something like 30,000,000, and of Denmark, 2,300,000.

JESSE K.—Although your letter is long, it is scarcely explicit enough; still, so far as we understand the case, there would be no impropriety at all in the step.

A. TERRY.—The blue soda-water paper contains thirty grains of carbonate of soda; the white paper, tartaric acid, twenty-five grains.

G. P. O.—You are in error; the word "Cassandra" does not mean a prophetic; Cassandra was a prophetic; the name signifies in Greek a "reformer of men."

A. J. M.—We know of no specific against the hair turning grey, and do not in general approve of hair dyeing. Colloid is obtained in a liquid form.

T. J.—The Yarra-Yarra is the river on which the Australian city of Melbourne is situated. The name means, in the language of the aborigines, the ever-flowing river.

A. T. M.—Creole does not mean a Mulatto; the term is given to any native of a West Indian colony, whether white, black, or of the mixed population.

B. M.—No person is eligible for an appointment as draughtsman in the Hydrographic office of the Admiralty, whose age is under 17 or above 28 years.

SOPHIA.—Your name is from the Greek, and means wisdom; Phoebe is also from the Greek, and means the light of life. Handwriting very elegant.

D. D.—We know of no simpler or safer tonic than quassia; it may be safely used by any one, as it does not increase the animal heat or quicken the circulation.

THECKLA.—Insert a small morsel, about the size of a pin's head, of stick cascote into the hollow of the tooth; it will give instant relief; and after two or three applications, the toothache will wholly cease.

SIMON STYLITAS.—Iodine, twelve grains, and lard or spermaceti ointment, half-an-ounce, will make a good application for bruises, if rubbed on twice or thrice a day. Wear larger shoes.

A. P. O.—No; we cannot say that we accept the notion that every word spoken since the creation of Adam until now, still exists as a sound in the earth's atmosphere. It is a mere philosophical theory or conjecture.

A. Z.—It was not at all incumbent on the gentleman to escort the lady home on foot a distance of three miles. But it was not improper; the gentleman very likely insisted on doing so, and the lady, probably, was young and pretty.

STRELLA.—We cannot say. Your question would puzzle the Astronomer Royal himself. Perhaps you might find some enlightenment in the "Nautical Almanac," published by the Admiralty.

THOMAS B.—The office of steward on board merchant ships is generally obtained through private influence. If you have none, you should apply to a shipping agent, or to the captain on board. Handwriting good.

S. W. T.—The dilemma is, no doubt, painful, but we cannot advise you how to act. Be patient; the truth will, sooner or later, come uppermost, like cork when forcibly kept under water.

ELLEN M.—In some of your strictures on young men we concur, from others we dissent; and strongly suspect "thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrewd with thy tongue," or pen, which is pretty much the same thing.

P. R.—A few drops of any perfumed oil will prevent your books from being injured by damp. This was a remedy used by the ancients; the Romans employing oil of cedar to preserve valuable manuscripts.

ÆTIO.—Your friend's assertion is quite correct; there is in the blood the constituent of iron; and in the blood of forty-two men there is alleged to be sufficient to make a ploughshare of something like 24 pounds.

GOLDEN CROSS.—There is a Prussian order called the Black Eagle—it has been lately conferred on Prince Alfred as a mark of honour, if such a term can be given to anything Prussian.

GEORGE J.—There ought to have been no difficulty in obtaining the numbers of THE LONDON READER which you required. Send the requisite amount in stamps to the publisher.

R. H. B.—To stain violins a mahogany colour, (or light red brown), boil half-a-pint of madder and a quarter of a pound of fustic in a gallon of water; brush over, when boiling hot, until properly stained. Or, brush over with a weak solution of aquafortis, half-an-ounce to the pint, and finish with the following: Mix four ounces and a half of

dragon's blood, and an ounce of soda, (each well bruised), in three pints of spirit-of-wine; let this stand in a warm place, shake frequently, strain, and lay on with a soft brush, repeating till of a proper colour; polish with linseed oil or varnish.

SYDNEY C.—No, after the examination, the appointment, like others in the public service, is on probation, and may be cancelled for untimely service, although not accompanied by misconduct. There is no appeal.

CHARLES JAMES, who is rather tall, twenty years of age, of fair complexion, wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence, and exchange *cartes* with a young lady; he is a clever organist, and is in a good position.

OTTO S.—There is a very good maxim which you appear to have forgotten—viz., "never to trouble another for what you can do for yourself;" the whole of the information which you seek from us, you could readily obtain from the "Post Office Directory," to which we refer you.

B. F.—There is a means (at least we are credibly so informed) of increasing the length and strength of eyelashes; and it simply consists in clipping off the split ends—say about once a month. This method is generally practised by Eastern beauties. Try it. Handwriting careless.

EDITH.—No gentleman should dance more than three times with the same lady during the evening; except in the case of lovers, who are privileged to do odd things, and married couples, who can dance with each other as often as they please.

EDMUND F.—There are two distinct uses of the word "as," followed by a disjunction. Thus:—As (seeing that) men are good or bad, we should be careful with whom we associate; or it may be: (According) as men are good or bad, they receive reward or punishment. Handwriting good.

BOOKWORK.—A solution of oxalic, citric, or tartaric acid, is perhaps the readiest means of removing stains from books and prints. This may be applied without fear of injury, and will obliterate writing on book-margins without damaging the text.

A. B. C.—The costs of bringing an action for breach of promise of marriage would be from £40 to £50, exclusive of expenses of witnesses. If the verdict of the jury should be in your favour, your costs would be perhaps £10; the losing party paying all the rest.

MARY AND FANNY wish to marry. "Mary" is 5 ft. in height, with blue eyes and light brown hair. "Fanny" is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, with dark grey eyes and brown hair. Both are twenty-four years of age, very domesticated, and competent to make good and loving wives.

OTTO.—The project for relaying the electric telegraph across the Atlantic between England and America is by no means "a delusive idea." It is, on the contrary, a thing that will doubtless be accomplished. The Great Eastern will convey the cable and apparatus for laying it.

N. F. G.—Nails grown into the flesh may be remedied by the simple expedient of cutting a notch in the middle of the nail every time it is pared. The tendency of the nail to close the notch will draw it up from the sides. (Hair pale auburn.)

BERENICE.—There is nothing better than exercise, frequent bathing and simple diet to avert or cure the disfigurement of a blotched face. If these do not at least produce a clear complexion, the cause is owing to the texture of the skin itself.

A. T. L.—Of course we do not believe in predictions of the approaching end of the world; notwithstanding the ecclesiastical character of the prophet, his vaticinations are simple moonshine—but "moonshine" that pays, and brings him "unco siller."

H. S.—We can only answer your question approximately; we believe there are about 3,664 known languages and dialects in the world; of these 973 are Asiatic, 587 European, 276 African, and 1,624 American. Garibaldi is said to be master of eleven of the European and American languages.

CAMILIA.—Certainly delicacy must be regarded as the chief feature which adorns the female character. Not, however, that exquisite kind which makes a merit of a blush, but that high-minded delicacy which preserves its parity amongst women as well as in the society of men.

O. L.—Shakespeare and other great geniuses are said to be "immortal" because the works they have left to the world are of themselves an incarnation and perpetuation of the immortal faculty of mind. We think your objection to the term very absurd and hypercritical.

MAHALA.—It is Sierra Leone and not Ceylon that is called "the white man's grave;" but the climate of Ceylon is also often deadly to Europeans. The latter island was anciently called Taprobane, and from its great beauty was fabled to be the real Paradise of the Bible.

SOUTH SAXON.—Forks were used by the Italians in the fifteenth century; and were used in England in the time of Edward I., but were not known in Scotland until about the period of the Revolution. Knives were first made in London in 1563.

ISHMAEL WORTH.—As a general rule, strict inquiries are not made as to the health, age, or character of candidates for the Civil Service except in the case of those who are successful in the competition before the examiners. Your writing is a good official hand.

AMY ROBERT.—Personal fastidiousness may occasionally be the consequence of great refinement, but is generally only self-love; and is not seldom even inconsistent with itself, for we have known the coarsest things done and the crudest things said by so-called fastidious people. To your other question, yes, in all probability.

A CONSTANT READER.—Lunar caustic or nitrate of silver applied in solution (one drachm of salt to one ounce of water), is an excellent remedy for removing warts, proud flesh, &c. Pencil over the excrescence with the solution, using care; it will blacken the skin, but that will soon peel off.

G. H.—Candidates for the Civil Service of India are required to pass a preliminary examination in the English language and literature (including the laws and constitution), the language, literature and history of Greece, Rome, France, Germany, Italy; mathematics, pure and mixed; natural science, moral sciences, and Sanskrit and Arabic language and literature. In June or July next an examination of candidates in these subjects will be held; and in June or July, 1865, a further examination of selected

candidates will take place in the Sanskrit, the vernacular languages of India, the history and geography of India, the general principles of jurisprudence and elements of Hindu and Mohammedan law, and political economy. Language and law are regarded by the commissioners as the most important subjects in this examination.

E. H. C.—With more care and practice your handwriting would be pretty good; at present it is not adapted for a merchant's office.

G. K.—It is an error to suppose that the song of the nightingale is melancholy and that the bird only sings at night. There are two varieties of the songster, one that sings by night, and another that sings only in the day.

ISABELLA S.—There can scarcely be a question on the point—English women are admittedly more beautiful than French women; among the latter a fine countenance is a rarity, whilst amongst the former it is the rule. The verdict in favour of the superior charms of French women given by the Japanese ambassadors goes for nothing.

STRA.—The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, are the principal trustees of the British Museum; and you must apply to them, as they have the appointment of all subordinate servants and officers of that institution. If your age does not exceed 30, you will be eligible in that respect.

SANDY.—Candidates for clerkships (third class) in the Post Office undergo an examination in writing from dictation, arithmetic, with vulgar and decimal fractions, English composition, the general principles of equity and common law, and conveyancing (though we cannot say what this last subject has to do with the conveying of letters).

ARTHUR G.—Tie-doloureux is a nervous pain, and therefore difficult to allay. The following will give you great alleviation of it:—Half-a-pint of rosewater, with two teaspoonfuls of white vinegar made into a lotion, and applied on linen, three or four times daily; use fresh lotion and linen each time.

JESSE.—You can make excellent cayenne pepper of English chilies. First get your chilies, and place the pods only in a colander before the fire to dry, which process will take some ten hours. Then pound in a mortar with their weight of salt, and when powdered very fine, secure in a stoppered bottle.

X. Y. Z.—Where wedding cards are sent out, the number is determined according to the various members of which the family to which they are sent is composed. If a family composed of mother, aunt, and daughters (if these latter have all been introduced to society), three cards should be forwarded.

SARAH CHRISTIAN.—The rules of public institutions are made in order to be adhered to. If you have agreed in writing to confide the care of your child to the institution in question, there is a strong moral obligation on you to allow her to remain there for the specified time. But, of course, she cannot be detained from you for by law you can, if you choose, resume the custody of her.

AGATHA AND MARY.—If the sculptural grace and flow of drapery, which hides while it indicates the symmetry of the figure, is sought for, "Agatha" is right in asserting that it cannot be attained with ermine. If, however, the object is simply to set off the mere material of the dress, nothing surpasses crinoline; it was, indeed, chiefly the desire to display rich materials that led to its introduction.

Two young ladies, LISA and MEDA, are willing to confer wedded joys on two bachelors prepared to marry. "Lisa" is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, has pale auburn hair, blue eyes, very fair complexion, slight colour, straight nose, and fine-looking. "Meda" is 5 ft. 1 in. in height, has faxon brown hair, dark grey eyes, slightly retroussé nose, fair complexion; can play and sing.

G. C. R.—Supposing your question has reference to our temperate climate, the coldest hour of the twenty-four is from four to five in the morning, and the warmest from two to three in the afternoon; the mean heat is from half-past eight to half-past nine, and the greatest range is in July, the least in December. Consult Admiral Fitzroy's publications.

ANNE STREMOU.—A good means of rendering the skin soft and the complexion clear in the following:—Mix flowers of sulphur in a little milk, and after standing an hour or two take off the milk, without disturbing the sulphur, and apply it before washing. A little of this mixture made over night, with evening milk, may be used next morning, but not afterwards, as it should be made fresh for each occasion—about a wineglassful will be sufficient.

ATHALIE.—It is difficult to say; there are few subjects which have been more written upon and less understood than that of friendship. According to some, it is an almost inestimable virtue—according to others, it is an inconvenience, to say the least. But probably those persons who consider it in this last light, are only specialists, who by expecting too much from friendship, and drawing the bonds too closely, would at length break them. Real friendship never thrives unless engrained on a stock of known reciprocal merit.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"S. W." responds favourably to "B. M." She is tall (5 ft. 5½ in.), good-tempered, considered tolerably pretty, but has no money nor property; is twenty-two years of age, and thinks she would make "B. M." a suitable partner—"D. H." (Rambon) will be most happy to correspond and exchange *cartes-de-visite* with "D. B." (No. 49.) Is twenty-one years of age, and tall, has light hair, hazel eyes, and rosy cheeks, and is of a most affectionate disposition.

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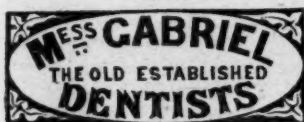
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